

# **CONSCIOUSNESS-IN-THE-WORLD**

**AN ANALYTICAL INVESTIGATION OF  
THE THEORY OF PHENOMENAL CONSCIOUSNESS  
IN THE EARLY WORKS OF JEAN-PAUL SARTRE**

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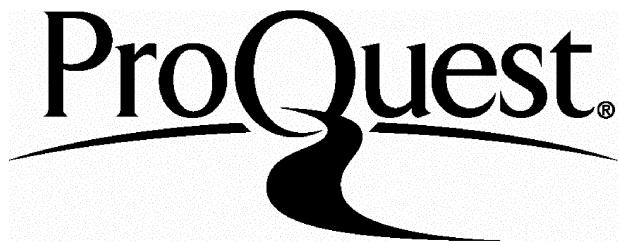
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## Abstract

The primary aim of this thesis is to discern whether Sartre's early work on phenomenal consciousness has distinctive and valuable contributions to make to current debates over these issues in anglophone philosophy. The method is resolutely analytical, aiming to identify and assess the details of Sartre's position and arguments for it in the light of classical and current debates. This involves much exegetical work concerned with Sartre's use of terms and principles drawn from previous thinkers. The secondary aim is to show the extent to which the famous themes of Sartrean existentialism — freedom, bad faith, and the look — are grounded in his theory of phenomenal consciousness. The principal text is *Being and Nothingness*, though extensive use is made of works that preceded it.

The thesis comprises four chapters. Chapter 1 is concerned with clarifying Sartre's conception of intentionality in relation to current anglophone conceptions of intentionality. I detail and defend Sartre's view that intentionality is a relation of apprehension that involves both qualitative and classificatory awareness. Chapter 2 situates Sartre in relation to classical and current theories of consciousness and assesses Sartre's arguments for his conception of intentionality. I claim that Sartre has shown that his conception is useful, but not that it is correct. In chapter 3, I argue that Sartre succeeds in maintaining that perception and hallucination involve distinct types of experience, where current anglophone attempts to maintain this fail. In Chapter 4, I argue that Sartre's holistic view of the subject as an environment-inclusive being-in-the-world is preferable to reductionism, and that his theory of qualitative aspects of experience is preferable to the representationalist approaches dominant in anglophone thought. I conclude by drawing out the implications of my discussion for Sartre's theories of freedom, bad faith, and the look.

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## Abbreviations

All bibliographical references in this thesis are by author name and date of edition referred to and listed in this way in the bibliography, except the works of Jean-Paul Sartre. The most frequently cited of Sartre's works, the textual focus of the thesis, are referred to by the following abbreviations. Others of his works are referred to by date of original publication. They are all listed in the bibliography in order of original publication. Quotations do not usually depart from the listed edition, but where I have amended the translation I indicate and defend my departure from the listed edition in a footnote.

TE *The Transcendence of the Ego: An Existentialist Theory of Consciousness*. Original publication:1936.

STE *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*. Original publication: 1939.

PI *The Psychology of Imagination*. Original publication:1940.

B&N *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*. Original publication:1943.

## Introduction

# Consciousness-in-the-World

‘To be is to fly out into the world ... to burst out as consciousness-in-the-world’, wrote Jean-Paul Sartre in an early manifesto article. ‘This necessity for consciousness to exist as consciousness of something other than itself Husserl calls “intentionality”’ (1939, 5). This excited article is a brief presentation of the basic theory of *Being and Nothingness*, published four years later. This basic theory is that, because consciousness is intentional, ‘consciousness has no “inside”’, so ‘everything is finally outside, everything, even ourselves’ (1939, 5). The intentionality of consciousness, that is, is its structure as a relation to the objects of the world. Consciousness is not, for Sartre, a sequence of experiences generated by neural stimulation and independent of a reality beyond them. And this in turn means that the subject of psychological theorising, the entity that has these relational experiences, is itself not independent of the objects of experience. It is not a brain or body, still less an ego or soul, but comprises the body and brain plus aspects of the body’s physical environment. This theory, on which Sartrean existentialism is built, that is, is opposed to the traditional distinction between subject and object. In addition to this, intentional experience provides structures within which objects are experienced. So although the being of the objects of

experience is independent of consciousness, the way they seem is not: 'essentially external to consciousness, the world is nevertheless essentially relative to consciousness' (1939, 4). The hyphenation of 'consciousness-in-the-world', like that of 'being-in-the-world' (Heidegger's '*in-der-welt-Sein*'), is meant not only to indicate the dependence of consciousness on the independent existence, or being in-itself, of its objects, but also the dependence of the structures of *the world* of experience and action on consciousness.

Anglophone philosophers interested in Sartre's early writings have tended to focus on his theories of the freedom of the individual, bad faith as a way of hiding truths from ourselves that we would rather not face, and the objectifying and alienating 'look' as the basis of intersubjective relations. Sartre's theory of the relation between consciousness and reality has only recently been attended to in anglophone literature (e.g. McCulloch 1994, ch.s 5-7; Wider 1997). This new interest is a result of a shift in the methods and concerns of anglophone philosophy of mind. At the time Sartre wrote *Being and Nothingness*, the central methods of anglophone philosophy were conceptual and linguistic analysis. Philosophical problems, thought some philosophers, will dissolve or at least be made more manageable if we first clarify the terms in which they are framed. The classic work of anglophone philosophy of mind from this era, the middle of the twentieth century, was not about mind or consciousness as such. It was aptly titled *The Concept of Mind* (Ryle 1949). Other philosophers thought that philosophy should focus on sentences about the mind, rather than the mind itself, on the grounds that disputants in debates about the mind have such disparate conceptual schemes that often they do not agree on enough to even understand one another's claims, but everyone agrees on what sentences about the mind are (Quine 1960, § 56). This gave rise to two questions that together drove the philosophy of mind for two decades. One was: how are the sentences of psychology, which display logical intensionality (see 1.1), related to the sentences of the physical sciences, which do not (e.g. Chisholm 1957, ch. 11)? The other was: what are

the conditions under which we ascribe mental states or events to one another (e.g. Davidson 1970, § II)?

This focus on our mentalistic terminology and the ways in which we employ it waned in the 1980s as anglophone philosophers began again to ask about the nature of the mind, or of consciousness, itself. One landmark on this journey was Searle's criticism of linguistic philosophy that it tends to confuse features of reports for features of things reported. The property of intensionality, a central interest of anglophone philosophy of mind for two decades, he pointed out, is a property only of the sentences we use to report mental states and events: it is not a feature of mind or consciousness at all (see 1.1). This move away from the conceptual and linguistic approaches to the philosophy of mind has made the works of the European Phenomenologists, who did not employ the methods of linguistic and conceptual analysis, more relevant to anglophone debate.

The recent growth of anglophone interest in Sartre's philosophy of mind and metaphysics is a result of this new relevance of the works of the Phenomenologists generally. But the works resulting from this new interest have two principal shortcomings. First, they tend to treat Sartre's theory of the relation between consciousness and reality as simply another aspect of his larger picture, alongside freedom, bad faith, and the look. This overlooks the fact that, as I hope to show in this thesis, Sartre's theory of the relation between consciousness and reality is the foundational theory on which the rest of his claims are built. As a result, it overlooks the fact that critiques of his theory of consciousness and reality have ramifications for the themes of freedom, bad faith, and the look. So the new interest in Sartre's philosophy of mind and metaphysics does not make as big a contribution to Sartre scholarship as it might. Second, and more importantly, the recent anglophone work on Sartre's theory of the relation between consciousness and reality is based on misunderstandings of some of the key components of Sartre's work. His terms 'phenomenology' and 'intentionality' do not mean what their

anglophone homonyms mean (see 0.3 and 1.1), for example, and his use of the term ‘body’ is ambiguous between the usual sense of the-skin-and-everything-within and the Cartesian sense of extended substance (see 4.6). Not only does the recent work fail to make as big a contribution to exegetical work on Sartre as it might, but it also fails to draw on exegetical work as much as it might, and as a result fails to discern in Sartre’s work the distinctive and challenging contributions that his work can make to current anglophone debates over the nature of consciousness.

My aim in this thesis is to advance the current work on Sartre’s theory of consciousness and reality through a close exegetical reading and analytical critique of Sartre’s works that shows the distinctive and valuable contributions his work has to make to current anglophone debate over consciousness and the contributions current anglophone work on consciousness has to make to the consideration of Sartre’s theories of freedom, bad faith, and the look. The most important contributions Sartre can make to current anglophone debate are his relational conception of conscious experience and his conception of the extended subject. These conceptions, I claim, support a significant aspect of his existentialist theory of freedom, the claim that human behaviour cannot be explained purely in terms of mechanistic interaction of the brain with the physical environment. In addition, Sartre’s work on the relation between perceptual and hallucinatory experience provides a strong and innovative way of resisting all forms of the argument from hallucination, which has traditionally driven theorists to the claim that experience is self-contained with respect to the rest of the world, and hence to the dualism of subject and object that Sartre aims to dissolve.

I find that some key aspects of Sartre’s account of the way in which intentionality provides the structures of the world as we experience it must be revised in the light of recent anglophone work on conceptual and nonconceptual aspects of experience. These revisions make no significant difference to Sartre’s conception of the way in which we are aware of our

surroundings, but do have ramifications for Sartre's related theories of self-awareness and bad faith. I also find that Sartre's account of the way in which intentionality presents objects does not support his theory of 'the look' as the basis of human relations, and indeed that it provides a way of denying the purported inevitability of the misrepresentation of others in the look. And I find that Sartre's claim that in imaginative experience the subject can never mistake the imagined object for a real and present object is unwarranted. Such a mistake need not be common, but I claim that there is no reason to rule it out. While this alteration has little impact on Sartre's theory of the nature of imagination, or on the contribution made to current debate by his theory of the nature of dreams and hallucinations, I claim that it does have an impact on his theory of bad faith: the subject in bad faith may, it seems, be genuinely ignorant of the truth.

I present a more detailed overview of the structure and claims of the thesis at the end of this introduction. The intervening sections present in more detail just which aspects of Sartre's work I am focusing on, and the ways in which I approach these aspects.

## 0.1 The Early Works of Jean-Paul Sartre

The 'early works' of Jean-Paul Sartre are, for the purposes of this thesis, *Being and Nothingness* and the works that preceded it. This restriction is not to be taken to indicate that I agree with, for example, Warnock (1958, xviii) that there is a radical discontinuity between Sartre's early and later, more Marxist, work. In fact, I agree with Danto (1991, 134), for example, that Sartre's life's work is a progression. The restriction is rather imposed by the fact that it is in these works that Sartre focuses on the question of the nature of consciousness, the world, and the subject, and develops his distinctive position. Sartre's later works, concerned with ethics, politics, psychoanalysis, and the nature of truth presuppose and build on the theory of the natures of

consciousness, the world, and the subject developed in these early works. Sartre's major concern in those works is with intersubjective relations and the significance of the historical location of the individual for the projects and choices of that individual. Although these later works do involve some modifications of Sartre's early theory of 'consciousness-in-the-world', they do not focus on that theory.

In an interview in 1975, Sartre denied that there was a major break between his earlier and later works. 'I think that I underwent a continuous evolution beginning with *Nausea* all the way up to the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*', he said (1981, 12). Commentators dealing with the early works often miss this point: they too are a 'continuous evolution', and should not be treated as presenting aspects of a single theory. The evolution of these works is largely the waning of Sartre's commitment to Husserl's phenomenology. Simone de Beauvoir's description of Sartre turning 'pale with emotion' on first hearing of Husserl's philosophy is well-known, as is the fact that he spent the following academic year (1933-4) at the Institut Français in Berlin studying Husserl's works (Beauvoir 1965, 135-6). Sartre later wrote in his diary of the impact of Husserl:

'Husserl had gripped me. I saw everything through the perspectives of his philosophy ... I was "Husserlian" and long to remain so.' (1983, 183)

Though he always objected to Husserl's belief in a 'transcendental ego' underlying and unifying experience, Sartre's earliest published writings on Husserl – in *Imagination* and *The Transcendence of the Ego*, as well as the manifesto article mentioned above – are enthusiastic and raise little dissent. By the end of the 1930s, Sartre's comments on Husserl were more circumspect: in *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* and *The Psychology of Imagination*, Sartre commits himself to Husserl's aim of describing the essences of experiences but does not explicitly assent to any significant

doctrine he considers to be Husserl's and, in the latter case, actively dissents from aspects of Husserl's theory of imagination (STE: 21-30; PI: 1-2, 32, 65). The reason for this growing disillusionment, he wrote in his diary in 1940, was that Husserl's philosophy 'evolved ultimately towards idealism, which I could not accept' (1983, 184).

The introduction to *Being and Nothingness*, 'The Pursuit of Being', is partly concerned with distancing the new work from Husserl and from certain aspects of Sartre's earlier works that had been inherited from Husserl. One aspect is Husserl's method of phenomenological reduction. This method is the suspension, bracketing, or putting out of play, of a pervasive presumption tacitly employed in everyday life. In *Ideas*, the presumption is that we inhabit a world comprising things that exist independently of our experience of them, and this belief must be suspended, or bracketed, on the grounds that experience fails to provide adequate evidence of its truth (1982, §§ 27-32; compare §§ 46, 55, 90). In *Cartesian Meditations*, on the other hand, the prejudice is that the world exists as a 'transcendent reality', a reality that outstrips our awareness of it even if it is not independent of that awareness, and this belief must be suspended (bracketed) on the grounds that it is not clear what it amounts to (1950, § 7). In both texts, the presupposition is 'suspended' in the sense that any claims that (implicitly or explicitly) require the truth of that presupposition are inadmissible to presuppositionless philosophy. Although Sartre questioned the use of the phenomenological reduction (or 'epoché') in his first book *Imagination* (IPC: 138-143), he explicitly assented to its use in *The Transcendence of the Ego* (TE: 35-6), *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* (STE: 28), and *The Psychology of Imagination* (PI: 207).

In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre links the use of the reduction to the idealism that he considers Husserl's philosophy to tend towards (B&N: xxvi, xxxvii). This is the form of idealism, which Sartre there calls by its alias 'phenomenalism', that construes reality to be ultimately constructed out of

mind-dependent appearances. I discuss this form of idealism, and Sartre's ascription of it to Husserl, in chapter 2 (2.1 and 2.2). But it is worth noting that since Husserl describes perceptual experience as direct contact with reality, which involves no subjective intermediaries, while claiming not to be explicitly or implicitly relying on the notion of mind-independent reality (in *Ideas*) or transcendent reality (in *Cartesian Meditations*), it is difficult to see how he can avoid the implication that the reality with which we have direct contact in perceptual experience is ultimately constructed out of mind-dependent or immanent experiences. This is certainly the conclusion Sartre draws, and it is for this reason that he begins *Being and Nothingness* by attempting to prove that perceptual experience is direct contact with, or apprehension of, mind-independent reality (B&N: xxi-xliii – ‘The Pursuit of Being’) and rejecting the phenomenological reduction as methodologically unsound (B&N: 3-4). Sartre wrote in his autobiography that the worldview he developed between the ages of five and ten (between 1910 and 1915) was an ‘idealism which it took [him] thirty years to shake off’ (1964, 51; see also 180, 182, 250). It was only twenty years until his Husserlian conversion; the third decade of this idealism ended with *Being and Nothingness*.

Overlooking this development and instead treating *Being and Nothingness* and the works that preceded it as a unified corpus is the root of some errors common among commentators. In 2.2, for example, we will see that the theory of consciousness as ontologically self-sufficient and founded entirely on its awareness of itself that Sartre presents in § III of ‘The Pursuit of Being’ is a view he ascribes to opponents in the course of arguing against them, but is usually taken as an expression of Sartre’s own view. Sartre is partly to blame for this, as he does not clearly separate out the distinct dialectical voices that contribute to the discussion in ‘The Pursuit of Being’ and does not explicitly say that he is rejecting a view that he formerly held (see IPC: 115; TE: 40). But it is clear that the claim that consciousness is ontologically self-sufficient is incompatible with the claim he is arguing for in that passage, that ‘consciousness is born *supported* by a being which is not itself’ (B&N: xxxvii).

The misreading is aided and abetted, it seems, by the common approach of treating *Being and Nothingness* and the works that preceded it as a unified corpus (e.g. McCulloch 1994, 101; Wider 1997, 86). Similarly, treating the novel *Nausea* (1938) as of a piece with *Being and Nothingness* leads some commentators (e.g. Murdoch 1953, ch. 1; Danto 1991, ch. 1) to claim that one of Sartre's major concerns is with the relation between language and reality. He is indeed concerned with our ways of understanding reality and representing it to ourselves, I claim, but this representation should not be taken to be primarily or paradigmatically linguistic (see chapter 1 note 15).

But the fact that the early works are a progression should not be taken as a reason to ignore the works preceding *Being and Nothingness*. Indeed, in *Being and Nothingness* Sartre often refers the reader to earlier works for clarification of a point that he continues to hold (B&N: 60, 61, 102, 258, 295, 392, 445, 575, 600). The analysis of the relation between perceptual and nonperceptual experiences in *The Psychology of Imagination* and the analysis of emotion as a 'specific manner of apprehending the world' (STE: 57) in *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*, for example, clarify the less detailed claims that Sartre makes in *Being and Nothingness* about hallucination and about ways of apprehending the world. I draw on these works in chapters 3 and 4 respectively for precisely this reason.

The fact that Sartre's early works are a progression, then, means that they should be treated as such. They are not unrelated, and often clarify and support one another. But they must be treated with caution, as the claims of one work are not necessarily all compatible with the claims of an earlier or later work. In particular, *Being and Nothingness* is based on a final break with Husserl's method of phenomenological reduction and the implications that Sartre saw that reduction to have. In this thesis, I take *Being and Nothingness* as the canonical text of the early Sartre, as it contains the most detailed presentation of his views and most clearly and thoroughly rejects the idealism that he found in Husserl and could not accept. I support my reading of this text

with reference to earlier works only when Sartre's own references to those earlier works indicate that this is acceptable, or when I can detect no inconsistency between the earlier claim and any relevant aspect of *Being and Nothingness*. I take the inconsistencies that there are to result from the rejection of the earlier use of the phenomenological reduction and the resulting earlier view of consciousness as ontologically self-sufficient and founded on self-awareness.

## 0.2 Phenomenal Consciousness

When Sartre uses the term 'consciousness' in his early works, he is almost always using it as a grammatically transitive term denoting an intentional mental relation to an object. 'All consciousness ... is consciousness of something' (B&N: xxvii). Sartre's 'consciousness' is not equivalent to Freud's 'consciousness', which denotes mental items or processes of which the subject is aware as they occur (Freud 1964, 70). Although Sartre does believe that consciousness of an object always involves an awareness of that consciousness, he considers this to be a substantial claim and not merely an analytical consequence of the term 'consciousness'. It is for this reason that he claims that such awareness of consciousness is necessary to account for our abilities to turn attention away from the world and towards consciousness and to engage in activities involving sequences of consciousness (see 2.2 and 2.6).

Sartre describes the basic form of consciousness as '*irréfléchi*', which is variously translated as 'unreflective', 'unreflecting', and 'non-reflective'. A consciousness of this type 'is directed to objects different in kind from consciousness' (PI: 10), objects such as clocks and tables (TE: 49; B&N: xxvii-xxviii). If I am conscious of something, in this sense, then that thing appears to me. These are two ways of saying the same thing (B&N: 3). And unreflective consciousness, for Sartre, requires the independent existence of

its object, the thing that appears (B&N: xxi-xlii). It is this form of consciousness that I label ‘phenomenal consciousness’: this form of consciousness is the *appearing* of some part of reality.

A derivative form of consciousness in Sartre’s writings, based on unreflective consciousness, is ‘reflection’ (*réflexion*). This is ‘a consciousness *directed upon a consciousness*, a consciousness which takes consciousness as an object’ (TE: 44). Where unreflective consciousness is awareness of something that is not itself a conscious episode, reflection is awareness of a conscious episode. Reflection on an episode of consciousness requires the prior existence of that consciousness, but the occurrence of an unreflective consciousness does not require the occurrence of reflection on it (TE: 45; STE: 56; B&N: 150). Since the consciousness reflected on is itself directed on an object, reflection is consciousness of consciousness-of-object. Sartre is adamant that the object of a reflective consciousness is necessarily other than the consciousness positing it: ‘reflection or positional consciousness of consciousness ... [is] a complete consciousness directed towards *something which is not it*; that is, toward consciousness as object of reflection’ (B&N: xxviii; my emphasis).

But Sartre also holds that a consciousness always involves some awareness of that consciousness. This awareness is not reflection, but is ‘pre-reflective’ (*préréflexif*) awareness. Sartre’s use of the term ‘pre-reflective’ echoes both Freud’s term ‘preconscious’ and Heidegger’s term ‘pre-ontological’. For Freud (1957, 173; 1964, 71), mental items and processes are ‘preconscious’ if the subject has no awareness of them as they occur but can easily become conscious of them, whereas for Sartre we are always pre-reflectively aware of our consciousnesses and can easily become reflectively aware of them. For Heidegger (1962, § 4), it is a necessary condition of undertaking ontological enquiry (defined as ‘that theoretical enquiry which is explicitly devoted to the meaning of entities’) that one already has at least an undetailed, indistinct, pre-theoretical understanding of the object of that enquiry – being. Similarly,

for Sartre reflection requires that one already has at least the undetailed, indistinct, pre-theoretical understanding of the object of reflection that is pre-reflective awareness (B&N: xxix, 74). Pre-reflective awareness is not a variety of consciousness (like unreflective and reflective consciousness), but a structure of both varieties of consciousness, an awareness involved in every consciousness. It is a vague and indistinct awareness of consciousness, a 'nonpositional' and 'nonthetic' awareness of consciousness. To become aware of a consciousness in detail requires a shift of attention away from the world and towards that consciousness. This is the 'positional' and 'thetic' awareness of consciousness that is reflection. Sartre's notions of 'positional' and 'thetic' consciousness are discussed in chapter 1, and I discuss the relation between phenomenal consciousness and pre-reflective awareness of that consciousness in chapter 2 (2.6).

The primary focus of this thesis, then, is on unreflective consciousness, awareness of surrounding reality, as opposed to reflective consciousness or pre-reflective awareness. This awareness includes not only seeing, hearing, smelling, and touching parts of the body's environment, but also proprioceptive and kinaesthetic awareness of the body. It may be objected that it is impossible to give a single account of consciousness of things, on the grounds that different sense modalities have different structures. Where vision seems to involve a visual field, for example, the sense of touch does not involve a tactile field: touch reveals the object or surface touched, but not its background (see Martin 1992). Any account of phenomenal consciousness that is insensitive to the differences between sense modalities runs the risk of treating features of one sense modality as features of all sense modalities. In particular, many philosophers who purportedly discuss perception in fact discuss visual perception and assume that the resulting account will be generalisable (e.g. Searle 1983, ch. 2). There is certainly a tendency within our culture to treat vision as paradigmatic of mentality in general. We talk of having an outlook, worldview, or point of view, and of insight, foresight, and hindsight. We can criticise a theory as being myopic (short-sighted) or as

having blind spots. The original meaning of ‘intuition’ is ‘directly seeing’, and ‘introspection’ means ‘looking within’. Whether these and other expressions manifest a natural tendency to emphasise sight as the primary mental modality, or whether such expressions have some other root and are responsible for the tendency to emphasise sight, is not to the point here. The point is just that we have this tendency, if you see what I mean. And this tendency must be guarded against if a single account of phenomenal consciousness is not to generalise aspects peculiar to sight.

Sartre’s account of phenomenal consciousness does not make that mistake. His account consists in detailing the claim that phenomenal consciousness is the direct apprehension or appearing of a part of mind-independent reality. Qualitative and classificatory aspects of phenomenal consciousness, such as seeing the redness of the tomato and seeing it *as* a tomato, are aspects of this relation of appearing, for Sartre. He holds that there is a single figure / ground structure to the whole of simultaneous conscious experience: it is not that there is a visual field against which a particular object stands out, and an audial field in which a particular sound stands out, for Sartre, but that there is a single field of consciousness on which a figure may stand out, and this figure may be detected by any of the sense modalities (see 1.2). This, then, is the ‘phenomenal consciousness’ under discussion in this thesis: the structure of our overall awareness of our bodies and their environments, an awareness that involves the various sense modalities in combination. This use of the term ‘phenomenal consciousness’ to mean awareness of the body and its environment does not match Block’s famous use of the term to mean a qualitative, nonrepresentational aspect of an experience (1995). Unreflective experience, for Sartre, always involves both representational (‘thetic’) and nonrepresentational (‘nonthetic’) aspects (see 1.3). I use the term ‘phenomenal’ in its original sense to mean the appearance or appearing of something. As we shall see in the next section, the use of ‘phenomenal’ to denote qualitative aspects of experience is the root of much misunderstanding of Sartrean phenomenology.

### 0.3 Phenomenological Ontology

The subtitle of *Being and Nothingness* is: *An Essay in Phenomenological Ontology*. Unlike other luminaries of the Phenomenological tradition such as Husserl (1982, §§ 27-75; 1950, §§ 4-9), Heidegger (1962, § 7), and Merleau-Ponty (1962, vii-xxi), Sartre does not provide an explicit and complete account of his understanding of the term 'phenomenology'. But without an adequate understanding of Sartre's conception of phenomenology, it is impossible to understand exactly what Sartre is trying to achieve. It is impossible, that is, to understand just what his philosophical method is, and how it relates to ontology, the theory of being. The aim of this section is to clarify Sartre's notion of 'phenomenological ontology'.

In contemporary anglophone philosophy, the 'phenomenology' of an experience is generally understood (following Nagel 1974) as 'what the experience is like', the distinctive subjective feel or flavour of the experience. What it is like to navigate by echolocation, on this model, is part of bat-phenomenology. A similar notion is Dennett's 'heterophenomenology', which denotes the way experience seems to all of us (1991, 66-98 and 406-10). McCulloch (1993) advocates an alternative usage, according to which the phenomenology of an experience is not what it is like for the subject, but simply the way that experience presents the world as being. On this model, the phenomenology of echolocation is captured in descriptions of the sonar-detectable properties of things. The way anglophone philosophers use the term, then, 'phenomenology' is either the subjective feel of an experience or the way an experience presents the world as being.

Sartre's recommendations of phenomenology may make it seem as if he takes phenomenology to be concerned with either what it is like to have experiences or the way experience presents the world as being. In

*Imagination*, he complains that a priori theories of experience fail to draw on our intimate (*intime*) awareness of our own experience and even the descriptions of introspective psychology are shaped by such theories. Phenomenology, on the other hand, exploits our intimacy with our own experience (IPC: 3, 22-3, 145-6). In *Sketch for a Theory of Emotions*, he makes this point in terms of '[t]he absolute proximity (*proximité absolue*) of the investigator to the object investigated' (STE: 23): the phenomenologist studies that which is closest. What could be epistemically closest to us, with what could we have more intimate awareness, than what it is like to be us and the way the world seems to us? On this conception, 'phenomenology' denotes a subject-matter – the way experience or the world seems to us. Danto understands Sartre in this way, claiming that Sartre's phenomenology is concerned solely with how things seem and his ontology is a taxonomy of the kinds of beings and their interrelations that must exist 'on the assumption that consciousness is "true"' (1991, 37). Although McCulloch appeals only to the *Oxford English Dictionary* to support his usage of 'phenomenology' (1993, 39), he does claim that Sartrean phenomenology is concerned with explicating how things seem (1994, 2-3) and 'what it is like' to experience ourselves and the world in the way in which we do (1994, 39). Sartre's 'careful reflection' on experience is not intended to recapitulate common-sense, he points out (1994, 21), but this is because common-sense can be wrong about the way human life and the world seem.

But such readings of Sartre misrepresent his project. Sartre clearly wants to explicate the nature of reality itself. He opens *Being and Nothingness* by arguing that the nature of reality cannot be inferred from some aspect of experience unless experience is direct presentation of reality itself (see 2.3). Similarly, if phenomenology were just a description of what experience is like or the way the world seems in experience, then it would be compatible with a number of possible ways in which reality or the world really is. In order to maintain this reading of Sartre's term 'phenomenology', then, it seems that Sartre must not be read as engaging in *ontology* at all. Rather than attempting

to explicate the structures of reality, on this reading, Sartre is attempting to explicate just the structures reality appears to have. It is not that ontology is his subject-matter and phenomenology his method, but rather that phenomenological-ontology is his subject-matter. But this reading is unjustified. In his earlier works, for example, Sartre is quite clear that the phenomenological psychology he is there engaged in is not concerned with the way the mind seems, but rather with the deep structures of the way consciousness is. He is using phenomenology as a method of psychology, a method of uncovering the structures of consciousness as a prior discipline to experimental psychology (IPC: 128-30; STE: 21-6; PI: 1-2). And in *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre is clearly concerned with ontology itself, which he understands as the explication of the structures of being (B&N: 620).

Sartrean phenomenology, then, is not the way experience seems or the way it presents the world as being. Indeed, it is not a subject-matter to be investigated. It is a discipline. And its subject-matter is appearance, or experience. Just as sociology is a discipline, concerned with societies. This is the conception of phenomenology that Sartre inherited from Husserl (e.g. 1982, § 50) and Heidegger (1962, § 7). Anglophone philosophers talk of experiences *having* phenomenology: there is a distinctive 'what it is like' to an experience, or a way an experience presents the world as being. But in the European sense of the term, an experience cannot *have* a phenomenology: an experience is a phenomenon, an appearance, and phenomenology is the study of that appearance; an experience cannot *have* a study of appearance.

Sartrean, and indeed all European, phenomenology, that is, is the study of *what it is* for something to appear to one. While 'what it is' for something to appear to one may arguably include a distinctive 'what it is like' or a way things seem, this will not exhaust what it is for something to appear. There will also be an ontological structure of that appearance. It may, for example, involve subjective objects of awareness such as ideas, impressions, percepts, sensa, sensations, or sense data. Or, if Sartre is right, it may be a relation of

apprehension between a body and a part of that body's environment. Whatever the ontological structure of appearance is, or indeed even if there is no general structure shared by all appearances, this ontology is not outside the purview of European phenomenology: it is at least part of what experience is, and phenomenology is the study of what experience is.

The ontology accessible to phenomenology, moreover, does not exclude the general ontology of reality for the European phenomenologists. If, for example, experience were to consist in apprehension of only a mind-dependent object that in some way represents a reality lying beyond it, then phenomenology could yield only an ontology of those mind-dependent objects and the apprehension of them. This, as we will see in 1.1, is a restricted purview of Brentano's early study of appearing. But the European philosophers who called the study of appearances 'phenomenology', Husserl and later philosophers, all held that experience is direct apprehension of transcendent reality itself. As we will see in 1.1, this did not mean for Husserl that experience is apprehension of *mind-independent* reality, since Husserl did not construe transcendent reality to consist in being in-itself. Sartre, on the other hand, argues that experience *is* apprehension of mind-independent reality, that transcendent reality *does* consist in being in-itself. But on either view, general ontology, which Sartre defines as a description of the structures of being (B&N: 620), is not outside the purview of phenomenology. If appearance is the appearance of transcendent reality, of reality not entirely contained within the experience, or reality at large, then the study of appearance is the study of that reality and the apprehension of it. Phenomenology, on this view of experience, yields general ontology. To put this point another way, 'phenomenology ... *does not exclude metaphysics* ... it by no means professes to stop short of the "supreme and ultimate" questions' (Husserl 1950, § 64; his emphasis).

Sartre's phenomenological ontology, then, is a description of the structures of reality gained by the method of describing what it is for a part of that reality to

appear to one. This method is not the same as that of either of his major phenomenological predecessors and influences, Husserl and Heidegger. We have already seen that, in *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre rejects the use of Husserl's phenomenological reduction on the grounds that it precludes construing experience as direct apprehension of mind-independent reality, a construal that Sartre holds to be correct (see 0.1). In this, he resembles Heidegger. But he does not follow Heidegger in abandoning Husserl's descriptive phenomenology for a study based on interpretation or hermeneutics. Having brought appearances into view by effecting the phenomenological reduction, for Husserl, the task of the phenomenologist is simply to describe the manifest structures of appearing (e.g. 1982, § 59; 1950, § 15). Heidegger, on the other hand, considers phenomenology to consist in the drawing out (*Auslegung*) of what is already implicit in the appearance of the world. We already have an undetailed, indistinct, pre-theoretical understanding of reality and its appearance based on our experience of reality, for Heidegger, and phenomenological enquiry consists in successive rounds of interpretation of this pre-theoretical comprehension (1962, §§ 3, 4, 32, 33). Sartre, on the other hand, retains Husserl's idea that the structures of appearing can simply be read off experiences when experiences are viewed in the right light. Phenomenology, for Sartre, is descriptive (PI: 2; B&N: xxiv). And the ontology it yields is a description of the structures of being (B&N: 620).

But the descriptive nature of Sartre's reduction-free phenomenology must be understood within Sartre's form of the common phenomenological aim of presuppositionless philosophy. The phenomenologists are not only concerned with removing personal idiosyncrasies from a philosophy that is supposed to transcend individual differences, as Macquarrie (1972, 25-6) holds, but also all reject our ordinary, purportedly pre-theoretical descriptions of experience as shaped by cultural or other prejudices often traceable back to past theories. It is for this reason that Husserl insists that phenomenology requires that 'we ... put out of action all the convictions we have been accepting up to

now, including all our sciences' (1950, § 3), and formulates the phenomenological reduction as a method of focusing attention on the actual structures of experience. For Heidegger, the main obstacle in the way of presuppositionless philosophy is inauthenticity – the usual ('average everyday') state of humans, motivated by anxiety (*Angst*) about the contingency of existence (1962, § 40). Inauthenticity involves accepting the concepts, beliefs, and interests of one's social and historical community, an acceptance that informs common-sense descriptions of experience as well as the theories of inauthentic philosophers. The phenomenologist aiming to expose the true structures of human being ('Dasein') and the world must not accept uncritically the concepts, beliefs, or priorities of the community, but must instead offer an authentic (*eigentlich* = ownmost) description of Dasein and the world (1962, § 27).

Sartre's rejection of common-sense is a development of those of Husserl and Heidegger. He agrees that common-sense and philosophical reflections on experience may be tainted by implicitly or explicitly held theories of experience, theories that are not themselves drawn from experience. In *Imagination*, he claims that the traditional understanding of the experience of imagining, shared by 'the man in the street' and philosophers and psychologists alike, is at least partly based on an a priori theory which colours the deliverances of introspection. The a priori theory construes thought as a set of atomic representations standing in causal or other associative connections with one another, and understands a single self-contained representative experience as a perception if caused by external objects and an imagination or hallucination otherwise (IPC: 3-6, 22-3, 25, 56, 124, 145-6). The most pervasive theory that infects reflection on experience, for Sartre, is the view that thoughts and actions generally manifest character traits in the way that symptoms manifest a disease (STE: 91; B&N: 159). This theory underlies a common form of bad faith (*mauvaise foi*): in order to escape the anguish (*angoisse*) of my freedom of thought and action, I may consider a cowardly thought or an heroic action to reveal my own cowardly or heroic

nature (1946a, 43). People in bad faith have false beliefs about what it is like to be them, and the way things seem to them is misleading. Reflection informed by this theory is ‘impure’ in that it ‘affirms *more* than it knows, directing itself through the reflected consciousness upon an object situated outside consciousness [i.e., my underlying nature]’ (TE: 64-5). As well as calling theory-laden reflection ‘*impure*’ (TE: 64; B&N: 155), Sartre calls it ‘*constituante*’ (B&N: 195) on the grounds that it constitutes a character which the action or consciousness reflected on is taken to manifest, and ‘*complice*’ – variously translated as ‘conniving’ (TE: 64), ‘accessory after the fact’ (STE: 91), and ‘accessory’ (B&N: 155) – due to its role in upholding bad faith. The basis of phenomenological certainty, on the other hand, is ‘pure reflection’, reflection that does not view experience through any (tacit or otherwise) theoretical lens, or interpret experience in the light of any theory, but simply presents experience as it is (B&N: 155). As well as calling theory-free reflection ‘*pure*’ (B&N: 155), Sartre describes it as ‘purifying’ (*purifiante*) due to its role in challenging the bad faith upheld by impure reflection (STE: 81). But pure reflection, he claims, ‘is rare and depends on special motivations’ (STE: 91).

The question of the possibility of such non-theoretical pure description need not concern us here. What is important is that Sartre does not equate phenomenology with common-sense description of experience, since the latter may already be coloured by generally accepted theories of consciousness and ontology. Common-sense must be suspended in the interests of a presuppositionless description of experience that may confirm or confute common-sense. The descriptions of experience that Sartre offers, then, are not supposed to be common-sense descriptions immediately recognisable by all, but the result of studying consciousness and appearance without the common prejudices of bad faith.

Sartre’s rejection of psychological theories not based on the deliverances of phenomenology, such as theories based entirely on experimental data, does

not rule out the use of experimental data in phenomenology (see IPC: 127-30; STE: 21-31; PI: 1-2). Indeed, he uses the findings of one of Piaget's experiments himself in the course of arguing that ongoing pre-reflective awareness of consciousness must be indistinct and undetailed (B&N: xxix; see 1.4). Like Merleau-Ponty (1962), Sartre differs from Husserl and Heidegger in using experimental data. The use of such data is ruled out by Husserl's phenomenological reduction, which rules out all scientific claims as based on the natural attitude of holding the world to be mind-independent or at least transcendent (see 0.1). And it is ruled out by Heidegger's hermeneutic method of making explicit what is implicit in our comprehension of reality and its appearing. But since Sartre does not use the reduction and does not consider phenomenology to be a hermeneutic enterprise, his conception of phenomenology does not preclude the collection and use of experimental data. Moreover, the use of such data seems justified: if phenomenology is supposed to provide a fundamental theory of appearing, then that theory should underlie and unify the findings of empirical observers of phenomenal consciousness. The experiences studied by empirical psychologists, that is, are concrete instances of the structures that phenomenology is supposed to uncover. For this reason:

‘To the phenomenologist ... every human fact is of its essence significant. If you deprive it of its significance you rob it of its nature as a human fact.’ (STE: 27)

If an observed fact of human consciousness is incompatible with consciousness having the structure phenomenology describes, then something is amiss. The experiment may need revising; but so may the phenomenological description. I employ this use of experimental data as a constraint on the findings of phenomenology in critiquing Sartre in 1.4, where I find that his claim that we have nonrepresentational ('nonthetic') awareness of the background of experience is shown to be false by certain experiments

which clearly indicate the representational nature of our awareness of the background.

In short, then, the theory under scrutiny in this thesis is a theory of the nature and structures of reality based on a purportedly theory-free description of what it is for that reality to appear to one, without the aid of a phenomenological reduction. This methodology will not itself be brought into question: the aim is to assess the resulting ontology. This assessment will involve the use of experimental data, a use that Sartrean phenomenology does not rule out, and philosophical argumentation. It will not involve any phenomenological description of experience: this thesis is concerned with a theory arrived at by phenomenology, but is not itself a work of phenomenology.

#### **0.4 Realisms and Idealisms**

Sartre claims to be searching for a theory of reality and our awareness of it which is 'other than realism or idealism' (B&N: xi), and describes his resulting position as 'a radical reversal of the idealist position' (B&N: 216). Commentators are divided over where to situate Sartre's ontology in the debate between realism and idealism. McCulloch (1994, 83-120), for example, argues that Sartre is a realist who occasionally but insignificantly lapses into idealistic terminology. Sprigge (1983, xi), on the other hand, describes Sartre as an idealist, though as less idealistic than either Husserl or Heidegger. Wider (1990) is more circumspect, delineating three types of realism and three corresponding types of idealism, and argues that Sartre is a realist in one sense and an idealist in the other two senses. One of the aims of this thesis is to clarify the ontology Sartre arrives at through phenomenology in relation to forms of realism and idealism.

There are three ways in which theories of the relation between mind and world can deserve the label ‘realism’. The denials of each of these forms of realism are the forms of ‘idealism’. The first form of realism is ‘ontological realism’. Ontological realists claim that reality is mind-independent. The *existence* of reality, on this view, is independent of our awareness of it and thought about it. Sartre is clearly committed to ontological realism: reality for him is mind-independent as it consists in ‘being-in-itself’ (*être-en-soi*). Ontological idealism construes reality as dependent on our awareness of it or thought about it for its existence. Reality is constructed of actual and possible appearances, on this view, which in turn are subjective mental entities or events that depend for their existence or occurrence on being experienced. Perception is apprehension of the world, but that world is dependent on the apprehension. This is Berkeley’s form of idealism (1975), and is also known as phenomenism. Sartre’s opposition to phenomenism, which he ascribes to Husserl, forms part of his argument for his claim that experience is apprehension of mind-independent reality, and is discussed in chapter 2.

The second form of realism is what I call ‘structural realism’. According to this view, the world is *structured* in a certain way independently of anyone’s awareness of it or thought about it. The ancient atomists and seventeenth century corpuscularians, for example, held that reality consists in a void populated by atomic particles instantiating certain properties. Not only is the existence of reality mind-independent on this view, its structure is too: the atoms are individuated and have properties independently of any human thought about them. Berkeley was also a structural realist even though he was an ontological idealist. The actual and possible mind-dependent appearances that reality consists in, for Berkeley, follow rules created and sustained by God. The structure of the universe is independent of our awareness of it or thought about it, since it is held in the mind of God. Danto (1991, ch. 1) and Baldwin (1996, 86) read Sartre as denying structural realism, as holding a structural idealist theory that being in-itself is unstructured, containing no basic entities, no natural kinds, and no natural

properties. The apparent structure of reality, on this reading, is a result of the structures of consciousness, of the ways in which reality appears. Wider (1990) seems to propose a variant of this reading, according to which being in-itself actually gains structures from the way in which I am aware of it. I will argue, on the contrary, that aspects of Sartre's theory of the relationship between consciousness and being in-itself discussed in this thesis require being in-itself to be structured prior to there being consciousness of it (see 5.2). Although Danto and Baldwin are right to point out that the *world* of everyday experience gains its structure and sense partly from the ways in which we are aware of it and the projects we are engaged in (see 1.3), and so the *world* has to some extent an idealistic structure, Sartre's distinction between being in-itself and the world must be borne in mind. The world is the result of the ways in which we are aware of being in-itself, and its structure, as we will see, is partly provided by the structure of being in-itself and partly provided by the ways in which we are aware of it.

The third form of realism is what I call 'semantic realism'. This view presupposes structural realism, and adds that statements about reality are true only if they adequately capture its structure. The ancient atomists and seventeenth-century corpuscularians, for example, claimed that the language of atoms and their qualities adequately mirrors the structure of reality. Semantic realists may differ over whether or not the basic ontology of the world is reflected in our ordinary experience, or whether the objects and properties of experience are merely apparent and no part of the real world. Berkeley takes the former option: the very ideas that we are aware of in perception are parts of the real world. Atomists and corpuscularians, on the other hand, take the latter option: ordinary experience does not reveal the real world of atoms and their properties. Although semantic realism requires structural realism, the converse is not the case. It is not incoherent to hold that reality has a structure, but due to some fact about the nature of language that structure cannot be codified in words. I argue that Sartre must be construed as a semantic realist with respect to being in-itself: in applying certain

ontological principles to mind-independent reality, I argue (5.2), he is claiming to have codified the structure of reality in the language in which those principles are expressed. This semantic realism with respect to being in-itself, I argue (5.2), is matched by a semantic realism with respect to the world. The structures of the world that result from the ways in which we are aware of being in-itself can be captured, and generally are captured, in the language we use of the world. The world, that is, really does contain blue things and red things and chairs and tables, so statements involving the terms 'blue', 'red', 'chair', and 'table' can capture the structure of the world.

Sartre, then, affirms ontological realism, the view that the world exists independently of consciousness of it or thought about it, rather than the Berkeleyan view that reality is constructed out of mind-dependent appearances. And, as we shall see, he holds that being in-itself has some mind-independent structure, even though the world of everyday experience partly gains its structure and its sense from the ways in which we are aware of it and engage with it. And since he attempts to describe this structure in language, he must be construed as a semantic realist with respect to mind-independent reality. The structures of the world that is constructed from the interplay of consciousness and being in-itself can also be captured in language, for Sartre, and so Sartre should be construed as a semantic realist with respect to the world as well.

## 0.5 An Analytical Investigation

The investigation of Sartre's theory of phenomenal consciousness undertaken in this thesis is an analytical investigation, in two senses of the term 'analytical'. First, it is a work of analytic philosophy. It draws on theories of experience formulated in the twentieth century anglophone analytic tradition of philosophy and pays close attention to argument and counterargument in the assessment of Sartre's theory. It does not make use of phenomenological

description of experience. It is also concerned with what is now the primary question of analytic philosophy of experience: what *is* experience?

Investigating Sartre's text using analytical tools and for analytical purposes, however, may result in serious distortion of Sartre's claims. One error is to suppose that Sartre's central concerns are the same as, or overlap considerably with, central concerns of current or past analytic philosophy. Sartre is not concerned, for example, with unpacking what is implicit in our ordinary everyday use of the term 'experience'. Conceptual analysis is quite foreign to Sartre. His aim is to discover what experience itself is, not what our idea of it amounts to. And this is because Sartre has not taken the 'linguistic turn' characteristic of much twentieth century analytic philosophy. Rather than focus primarily on the concepts or words in which philosophical questions are posed, Sartre follows Husserl (1982, § 59) and Heidegger (1962, § 7) in focusing attention on 'the things themselves' (see STE: 21; B&N: 3-4). Failure to see this disparity between the concerns of conceptual analysis and the concerns of the Phenomenologists led one commentator to investigate whether Sartre held that 'descriptions of mental phenomena can be reduced without remainder into statements about physical objects and physical processes', whether 'it is logically possible that persons ... could exist separately from bodies', and whether 'there is a logical connection between mental phenomena ... and observable states of the body' (Morris 1975, 4). Sartre is not concerned with reducibility of statements, the content of concepts, or logical possibilities: he is concerned, in *Being and Nothingness*, with the actual structures of reality and its appearing. Similarly, Sartre's account of the relation between consciousness and the rest of reality is not the same as the analytic philosophers' concern with the relation between rational thought and its objects. Ellis (2000) reads *Being and Nothingness* in the light of McDowell's *Mind and World* (1994), which is concerned with the relation between normatively evaluable conceptual thought and the world such thought is about. But Sartre is not concerned in *Being and Nothingness* with conceptual thought. Indeed, there is very little mention of concepts in the

book at all. His concern with ‘consciousness’ is, as I have said (0.2), a concern with experience, with the appearing of parts of reality themselves to the subject.

A second error easily made by analytic investigators of Sartre’s work is to suppose that what Sartre means by a certain term of art is what current anglophone philosophers mean by the same term. As we have already seen (0.3), the meanings of the term ‘phenomenology’ in anglophone and European philosophy are quite distinct. In anglophone philosophy it denotes a certain kind of property of an experience, the property of what it is like to have that experience or the way that experience presents the world as being. In European philosophy, on the other hand, it denotes a study of what it is for something to appear to one, of *what it is* to experience something. Failure to see this distinction leads Danto (1991, 37) and McCulloch (1994, 2-3 and 39) to take Sartre to be primarily concerned with the way reality seems to us, rather than with what it is for reality to appear to us. A similar problem arises with the term ‘intentionality’. This term is central to Sartre’s theory of experience: the basic structure of experience, he claims, is intentionality. In current anglophone philosophy, ‘intentionality’ means representation. If Sartre were using the term this way, his claim would be that an experience is an event or state that represents the way a part of reality is or might be. In which case, Sartre’s theory would fit well into the mainstream of current anglophone philosophy of experience (e.g. Searle 1983, ch. 2; Dancy 1985, ch. 11; McDowell 1986; McGinn 1989, 58-99; Tye 1992; Dretske 1995, ch. 1). But, as we will see (1.1), Sartre means his talk of intentionality to be an *alternative* to representational theories of experience. The intentionality of experience, for Sartre, is its nature as a relation to a part of mind-independent reality. When I see a tree, for Sartre, the tree is not represented by my experience, but is present ‘in person’ in the experience (B&N: 172, 318). The experience is not an event contained within my brain or body, but literally includes the tree as a spatiotemporal part. Sartre’s conception of intentionality is clarified in more

detail in chapter 1. For present purposes, all that matters is that Sartrean intentionality is not representation, but anglophone intentionality is.

In order to avoid these distortions of Sartre's theory, distortions based on reading Sartre's concerns and the meanings of certain of his key terms to be the same as those in current anglophone philosophy, this thesis is 'analytical' in a second sense. It involves detailed exegetical analysis of *Being and Nothingness* and, as part of that exegesis, historical analysis of the relation between Sartre's work and the works of those that most influenced him in this area. This exegesis and historical analysis, though, is not a quest for the historical Sartre. The aim is not to identify the actual thoughts had by a particular individual. The aim is to formulate a maximally coherent position on the basis of the claims made in the texts, claims which cannot be understood without an understanding of the terminology employed in those texts, terminology that had been adapted from those texts that most influenced Sartre. The position formulated will overlap significantly with the actual thoughts of the historical individual, and may well coincide with them perfectly, but the aim is the formulation of a position, not history. For one thing, his thoughts may not have been as coherent as the position that the exegesis aims at formulating. Exegesis, that is, involves a principle of charity: when two or more competing interpretations are available on the basis of all the evidence, the one that should be ascribed to the writer is the one that fits best with the rest of the text. This need not necessarily have been the writer's actual thought.

In pursuing this aim, I do not mean to imply that uses of Sartre's texts that do not employ such exegesis and historical analysis are invalid. It seems to me that reading a text as though it shared the concerns and terminology of one's own philosophical milieu instead of the concerns and conceptual apparatus that it makes most sense to ascribe to the author is a perfectly valid method of doing philosophy: it can lead one to consider options not previously considered. But such a use of the text precludes any interpretation that

radically challenges the concerns and conceptual apparatus of one's philosophical milieu. My exegesis of the text involves ascribing to Sartre a radical position of this sort, and one that I claim presents a distinctive and valuable contribution to current debates over the nature of experience. This is, at bottom, the view that experience is not generated within the head or body of the subject, but is a relation between the brain and some other part of mind-independent reality. Identifying this as the conception of experience set forth in *Being and Nothingness* involves analysis of the conception of intentionality employed by Sartre's most important influence in this area, Husserl, and analysis of Husserl's understanding of the term involves exegesis of Brentano's early works that influenced Husserl. This tracing of the development of the concept of intentionality (1.1), then, is not simply an historical tale: it is part of identifying the position to be ascribed to Sartre on the basis of his early works. This position, moreover, involves the similarly radical claims that hallucination is apprehension of part of mind-independent reality (see chapter 3), a claim that has been traditionally denied by philosophers and the denial of which has driven much theory of experience for the past four centuries, and that the subject of psychological theorising is not the brain or the body but literally includes parts of the body's physical environment (see 4.2). Since both of these two claims are radical with respect to current anglophone philosophy of mind, and indeed the tradition on which it draws, they are not likely to be ascribed to Sartre by a commentator who reads Sartre in the light of the currently dominant concerns and concepts.

It might be objected that my analytical approach to Sartre's texts, the approach of finding the maximally coherent position set forth, is mistaken on the grounds that Sartre objects to 'analytical' reason, in a third sense of 'analytical'. In this sense, a text is analytical if it employs concepts that it takes to be already delineated. The opposite is dialectical reason, which treats concepts as fluid and dynamic, to be refined as enquiry progresses. I treat *Being and Nothingness* and the works that preceded it as analytical in this third sense: the term 'intentionality', for example, means the same thing every

time it is used in those texts. Sartre objected to this form of analytical reason in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, where he instead employed dialectical reason. But this use of dialectical reason was a novel development in his writings. As he made clear in an interview towards the end of his life, his discovery of the dialectic was made well after the publication of *Being and Nothingness* (1981, 9).

It might further be objected that subjecting the position identified in the text to analytical discussion overlooks Sartre's opposition to analytical reason in a fourth sense of 'analytical'. In his first book, *Imagination*, Sartre objected to analytical reason on the grounds that it tends towards reductionism. Analysis of the object of study into its parts and the relations between them, he argued, overlooks the possibility that the whole is more than the sum of its parts and the relations between them, but has features of its own not had by any of its parts. This claim, I argue, is preserved in *Being and Nothingness*, and helps to drive the ontology he there formulates (see 4.3). But there is no link between reason being analytical in this sense and reason being analytical in the sense in which my scrutiny of Sartre's position is analytical. My scrutiny is analytical in the sense that it subjects the position to arguments against it, and identifies and assesses arguments in its favour and counterarguments against attacks on it. This does not in any way lead to a reductionist analysis of the things under discussion in terms of their parts. Indeed, I argue in chapter 4 on the basis of arguments drawn from recent analytic philosophy of mind and metaphysics that the holistic form of antireductionism that Sartre argues for is preferable to any reductionist analysis of experience and the conscious subject (4.4).

My investigation of the theory of phenomenal consciousness in the early works of Jean-Paul Sartre, then, is analytical in two senses. It aims to identify the maximally coherent position set forth in those texts, which involves identifying the meanings of the key terms in those texts in terms of the uses of those terms by the philosophers that most influenced Sartre as well as his

own uses of those terms, which I take to have been held constant in the texts under consideration. And it involves scrutiny of arguments for and against that position

## 0.6 Preview

The analytical investigation of the theory of phenomenal consciousness in Sartre's early works that comprises this thesis proceeds as follows. Chapter 1 investigates Sartre's conception of intentionality. I distinguish the current anglophone sense of the term 'intentionality' from the sense in which Sartre used the term by delineating their differing lines of descent from Brentano's influential discussion of it. I show that Sartre's conception is not one of representation, but of a direct apprehension of part of mind-independent reality. I assess Sartre's claim that this apprehension involves both 'thetic' or classificatory aspects and purely qualitative 'nonthetic' aspects. I argue that his claim that the determinations deployed in thetic awareness are built up on the basis of 'nonthetic' aspects of awareness, can be upheld given his claim that such a determination specifies what is inside the class by way of specifying what is outside the class. This construal of determinations, I claim, is of interest to current attempts to formulate a broadly empiricist theory of the acquisition of concepts in that it evades objections to such empiricism based on Wittgenstein's private language argument.

Chapter 2 is concerned with Sartre's arguments for his claim that phenomenal consciousness of reality consists in apprehension of reality rather than representation of it. The chapter begins by positioning Sartre's conception of consciousness with respect to the major theories in classical and contemporary debate. This is followed by an exegesis of the tangled and confused introduction to *Being and Nothingness*, in which I argue that the passage is aimed at proving that phenomenal consciousness is apprehension of being in-itself. I identify three arguments in the passage. I argue that

ultimately we should grant Sartre's claim that we should construe experience as apprehension of mind-independent reality if we want to formulate a definitive ontology, and his implicit claim that such an ontology is worth aiming for. But this shows only that such a conception of experience is desirable, not that it is true. The remaining two arguments I identify aim to establish the truth of the position, but I argue that neither succeeds. The fact that Sartre has failed to establish the truth of his theory, however, does not itself mean that the theory is of no interest to current debate. The interest that the theory holds, I argue, lies in the approaches to hallucination and to the ontology of experience and the subject that it leads to, which are discussed in chapters 3 and 4.

In chapter 3, I distinguish four forms of the argument from hallucination and argue that Sartre's position is immune to all of them. Arguments from hallucination attempt to show that the same type of experience as is involved in a perception could occur as an hallucination. If this is right, then the experience involved in a perception cannot consist in apprehension of the object of perception. The forms of the argument from hallucination all rest on one of three claims, all of which are denied by Sartre's theory. So taken as arguments against Sartre's theory, they all beg the question. One rests on the claim that subjectively indistinguishable experiences are the same type of experience, but Sartre's theory entails that the apprehension of one object may be subjectively indistinguishable from the apprehension of a very similar object, yet still be a different experience on the grounds that it involves a different object. Two forms of the argument from hallucination rest on the principle that perceptual experience is generated by neural stimulation, but Sartre's position denies this, claiming instead that perceptual experience is a relation between the brain or body and the object of apprehension. The final form of the argument from hallucination rests on the principle that there is no object of apprehension in hallucination. Sartre denies this. The difference between perceptual and hallucinatory experiences, he claims, lies in the attitude in which consciousness applies determinations in each type of

experience. Perceptual experience involves determinations attempting to track the qualities of the object of apprehension, whereas in hallucination the determinations are cued by these qualities but specify a distinct intentional object. So hallucination does involve an object of apprehension, even though it does not involve apprehension of the intentional object.

Chapter 4 is concerned with ontological motivations for denying Sartre's claim that phenomenal consciousness consists in apprehension of mind-independent reality. One motivation is the claim that mind-independent reality does not have the colours we experience. I argue that Sartre's position allows a construal of the colours of experience as properties of the relation of apprehension. On this view, I argue, reality will indeed appear coloured even though it is not. I also argue that this view is preferable to the view dominant in current anglophone philosophy that colours are ways in which reality is represented, since this representationalism overlooks the distinctive qualitative nature of colour. This notion of properties of the relation of apprehension, or 'textures of consciousness', I add, can be used to evade all forms of the argument that experience cannot be direct apprehension of reality since reality is not always the way it seems. On Sartre's account, the way reality seems is not only a function of the way it is, but also of the way in which I am aware of it.

The other ontological motivation for denying Sartre's relational view of consciousness is the view that it is explanatorily redundant. Everything that needs to be explained by experience can be explained in terms of neural events, the argument runs, so experiences must be reducible to neural events, and hence contained within the skin. I argue that there is no good reason to accept the claim that the best explanation of behaviour will refer only to neural events, and claim that there are explanatory gains to be had by referring to experiences themselves. In the course of arguing this, I show that Sartre's conception of experience requires a broad construal of actions as including parts of the body's physical environment. And I show that this

requires that the subject that experiences and acts, the subject of psychological theorising, is not the brain or body but an environment-inclusive extended subject, or being-in-the-world. These Sartrean conceptions of broad action and the extended subject, I argue, also make explanatory gains over the reductionist view of the subject as the body or brain and its actions as bodily movements. If this is right, Sartre's position is preferable to reductionism.

I conclude the thesis by summarising the key components of Sartre's theory and their importance for current debates over the nature of consciousness, and drawing out the ramifications of my exposition and assessment of Sartre for the nature of the phenomenology and ontology that must be ascribed to him and for the acceptability of the major themes of Sartrean existentialism. I argue that his phenomenology can be considered free of presuppositions and that his resulting ontology is one of ontological realism, structural realism with respect to being in-itself, a combination of structural realism and structural idealism with respect to the world, and semantic realism with respect to both being in-itself and the world (see 0.4). I argue that Sartre's ontology of relational consciousness and the extended subject license his claim that mechanistic determinism and social determinism are both false, but does not license the additional plank of Sartre's theory of human freedom, the claim that psychological determinism is false. I show how Sartre's theory of bad faith must be revised in the light of the shortcomings I identify in his theories of the relation between thetic and nonthetic awareness and of the nature of imagining. Most importantly, there is no reason to accept Sartre's claim that the play-acting involved in bad faith can never convince the actor. And finally I argue that Sartre's pessimistic theory of the nature of interpersonal relations as necessarily based on a distorting and alienating reification of the other is not only not supported by his theory of the ontology of phenomenal consciousness, but seems positively undermined by it.

## Chapter 1

# Intentionality: Object and Aspect

The keystone on which Sartre builds his theory of the relation between consciousness and reality, and as a result the rest of *Being and Nothingness*, is his conception of intentionality. Phenomenal consciousness is, for Sartre, an intentional direction towards something, which is the same as positing or having positional awareness of something. In Sartre's words:

'All consciousness, as Husserl has shown, is consciousness of something. This means that there is no consciousness which is not a *positing* of a transcendent object, or if you prefer, that consciousness has no "content". ... The first procedure of a philosophy ought to be to expel things from consciousness and to reestablish its true connection with the world, to know that consciousness is a positional (*positionelle*) consciousness of the world.' (B&N: xxvii).

Positional awareness of something enables the subject to pick out that something by means of a demonstrative thought or utterance: to be positionally aware of something, Sartre tells us (B&N: 180), is to fix attention

on that thing and single it out as a ‘this’ («*ceci*»). The intentionality of phenomenal consciousness of the environment, of which vision is one kind, then, is its positionality: it is its structure as direct contact with the part of reality experienced, which fixes the reference of a demonstrative term that picks out the part of reality experienced, making it ‘possible to effect a designation and to say *this* object, *that* object’ (B&N: 139).

This link between intentionality and demonstrative reference distinguishes Sartre’s notion of intentionality from the current anglophone notion with the same name. Anglophone philosophers equate intentionality with representation. For most anglophone philosophers, representation is independent of the reality (if there is one) which is represented, so to say that a visual experience represents a cat on a mat at a certain distance in a certain direction, for example, is to say that the experience might be a perception of a cat on a mat at a certain distance in a certain direction, or it might be an hallucination occurring in the absence of any such cat. An experience that is intentional in this sense cannot, in and of itself, ground demonstrative reference to a part of reality: since the same experience could occur in the absence of the cat, demonstrative reference to the cat in the case of genuine perception can be fixed only by the experience plus some relation, such as causation, between the experience and the cat. Although this view of intentionality is dominant among current anglophone philosophers (e.g. Searle 1983, ch. 2; Dancy 1985, ch. 11; McGinn 1989, 58-99; Tye 1992; Dretske 1995, ch. 1), it is not universal. McDowell argues for ‘object-dependence as a feature of intentionality’ (1986, 167). On this view, claims McDowell, a perceptual experience of a cat represents that cat in such a way that the experience could not occur in the absence of the cat, so the experience itself can ground demonstrative reference to the cat. McDowell’s position remains distinct from Sartre’s, however, in that McDowell equates intentionality with representation and wishes to build object-dependence into the notion of representation (which will allow for the claim about demonstrative reference), whereas Sartre equates intentionality directly with positionality (and hence the

claim about demonstrative reference), and sees this intentionality as an *alternative* to representational theories of the relation between consciousness and the world. To say that consciousness is intentional, for Sartre, is to say that ‘consciousness has no “content” ... A table is not *in* consciousness — not even in the capacity of a representation’ (B&N: xxvii). The difference between the Sartrean notion of intentionality, on the one hand, and the dominant and McDowellian anglophone notions, on the other, will be clarified in more detail in 1.1 in terms of their differing lines of descent from Brentano’s work, and in chapter 3 we will see that Sartre’s notion of intentionality succeeds in securing demonstrative reference to the world on the basis of experience alone but McDowell’s notion does not (3.3).

The Sartrean and anglophone notions of intentionality, then, differ in their analyses of the directedness of intentional events: anglophone philosophers understand this in terms of (object-dependent or object-independent) representation, whereas Sartre understands it in terms of some more direct relation that dispenses with representation altogether. But the Sartrean and anglophone notions of intentionality do share a central feature. In both cases, an intentional experience does not just present or represent an object but presents or represents it in a certain way, under a certain description, or to use Searle’s (e.g. 1983, 12-3) apt term, under an aspect. Intentional or positional awareness not only picks out a part of reality, but also makes a claim about that part of reality: that it is, say, a picture of a duck, a picture of a rabbit, or simply lines on a page. This is at least part of what Sartre means by the ‘thetic’ character of experience. In addition to this, according to Sartre, experience has a ‘nonthetic’ character. Awareness of some qualities of the world, such as phenomenal colours, and background awareness of parts of the world other than the posited figure on which attention is focused, Sartre claims, involve this nonthetic awareness. This view will be clarified and assessed in sections 1.3-1.5.

Sartre's discussions of the structures of intentionality occur mainly in *Being and Nothingness* part one chapter one ('The Origin of Negation') and part two chapters one ('Immediate Structures of the For-Itself') and three ('Transcendence'). Although this chapter draws largely on these discussions, quotations and examples are taken from all over his early writings, which reflects the centrality of his theory of intentionality to his overall worldview. Identifying a philosopher's theories inevitably involves some discussion of their terminology, and lexicography is particularly important in this chapter. Towards the end of his life, Sartre claimed:

'I never had any stylistic ambition for philosophy. Never, never. I tried to write clearly, that's all. ... Style is, first of all, economy: it is a question of making sentences in which several meanings co-exist and in which the words are taken as allusions, as objects rather than as concepts. In philosophy a word must signify a concept and that one only.' (1981, 11).<sup>1</sup>

In the philosophical writings with which this thesis is concerned, it seems to me, Sartre did adhere to this rule: same word → same concept. But the arrow is not double-headed: Sartre tends to use a variety of words drawn from different areas of philosophical tradition to indicate the same concept. The first three sections of this chapter aim to identify sets of Sartrean synonyms and near-synonyms, and their relations to their current anglophone homonyms, in order to clarify and situate his overall theory ready for assessment in sections 1.4 and 1.5. On Sartre's picture, experience involves the application of concepts ('determinations') motivated by, and formulated in response to, nonrepresentational qualitative aspects of the experience ('qualities'). I argue that he has not shown that we have purely qualitative awareness of the background of awareness, and that it seems that our awareness of this background involves some, albeit vague, representational structure. But his claim that there are qualitative aspects of phenomenal consciousness of the object of attention does provide an explanation of the origin of the concepts or

categories under which the experience is organised. Since these nonrepresentational aspects of experience motivate the application of representational content, they would seem to be present in awareness of both figure and ground. I conclude that Sartre's theory occupies an interesting position in current debates over representational and qualitative aspects of experience, although he has not provided any strong arguments for his position, and that this position has ramifications for the ontology of consciousness and world which will be discussed in full in chapter 4.

## 1.1 Intentionality and Positional Awareness

Sartre describes perceptual experience as 'positional' and 'intentional' awareness of an object on which attention is focused, and as 'knowledge' (*connaissance*) and 'intuition' of that part of mind-independent reality. The aim of this section is to clarify the meanings of these terms in Sartre's lexicon, and hence to clarify further the distinction between Sartre's conception of intentionality and the anglophone conception. First I argue that 'intuition' and '*connaissance*' are synonyms for Sartre, and that an object is intuited or known only if it is itself present to consciousness, directly, without intermediary. Next I argue that the object posited in an experience is the object intuited or known only if the experience is perceptual; in imaginative experience the intuited or known object is used as material on the basis of which something else is posited. Whatever object is posited is the intentional object, I claim, and the object to which attention is paid. This separability of the object intuited or known from the intentional object posited and attended to forms the basis of Sartre's innovative theory of hallucination which, as we shall see in chapter 3, allows him to resist all forms of the argument from hallucination, the argument that since perception and hallucination involve the same kind of experience, experience cannot itself render a part of the world available for demonstrative reference.

Sartre ties intentionality to demonstrative reference, as we saw in the introduction to this chapter: the intentionality of experience renders a part of reality available for demonstrative reference. The object made demonstratively available — ‘the *this*’ — may be an entity such as a chair or table, or a property of an entity such as its yellowness or roughness (B&N: 186). (I discuss the ontological status of the ‘this’ in 1.2.) Picking out a present ‘this’ in this way is what Sartre means by ‘knowledge’ (*connaissance*) when he applies it to perceptual awareness: ‘knowledge (*connaissance*) posits the object in the face of (*en face de*) consciousness’ (B&N: 94-5).<sup>2</sup> Sartre explicitly links this conception of *connaissance* to intuition:

‘There is only intuitive knowledge (*connaissance*). ... intuition ... is the presence of the thing ... “in person” to consciousness. Knowledge therefore is of the type of being “presence to —”.’  
(B&N: 172; see also TE: 35)

Sartre’s term ‘intuition’ (*intuition*) is not the same as its current anglophone homonym which denotes a pre-theoretical thought or feeling that may be elicited by a thought-experiment, or which is in play when a claim is considered intuitively plausible or counter-intuitive. It is, in fact, a French translation of the Kantian and Husserlian term ‘*Anschauung*’, usually translated into English as ‘intuition’ since its meaning is the same as the original meaning of that English term. The literal meanings of ‘*Anschauung*’ are sight, view, perception, and contemplation, and it is a component of such terms as ‘*Weltanschauung*’ (worldview, outlook). It is a term laden with visual connotations, but Sartre does not reserve it for visual perception, using it for all forms of phenomenal consciousness. Sartre takes the term from Kant and Husserl, and merely disagrees with them (as he reads them) over what we can intuit. Kant reserves the term for the deliverances of receptivity (1929, A19-21/B33-5), which on Sartre’s reading of Kant means that we can intuit only mind-dependent appearances (see 2.2). Husserl claims that we can intuit parts of reality (e.g. 1982, § 1), but on Sartre’s reading of Husserl as a

phenomenalist this is the claim that we can intuit mind-dependent objects (see 2.2). Intuition, for Sartre, is the presence of part of being in-itself 'in person' to consciousness (B&N: 172, 318). So perception, for Sartre, is intuition of a mind-independent object, precisely what he takes Kant and Husserl to deny.

Knowledge or intuition, for Sartre, 'posit the object in the face of (*en face de*) consciousness' (B&N: 94-5; see also PI: 14). Sartre makes much use of the term 'posit' and its cognates. Although he never defines it, it is clear that he has adopted it from Husserl and considers it to be part of the stock terminology of the phenomenological tradition in which he is keen to situate himself: he first uses the term in a phenomenological description of imagination and an exposition of Husserl's phenomenological method (IPC: 124-5, 136); his most detailed discussion of positing appears in the course of a phenomenological description of imagining (PI: 10-3); and the first use of the term in *Being and Nothingness* is to define Husserl's notion of intentionality as he understands it (B&N: xxvii). Husserl's use of the term is not consistent, however. In *Logical Investigations*, 'positing' (*Setzung*) awareness affirms the existence of its object whereas 'nonpositing' awareness suspends judgement about the existence or non-existence of the object (1970, Inv. V § 34). In *Ideas*, 'positing' is used in a variety of senses, the widest of which encompasses the varieties of mental attitudes towards objects, such that judging, wishing, and perceiving, for example, are different forms of positing (1982, § 129). And in *Cartesian Meditations*, 'positing' is defined as 'taking a position as to being', and there are a wide variety of such positions, including 'certainly existing, being possible, being probable, also being beautiful and being good, being useful, etc.' (1950, § 15).

Sartre does not use the term in any of these senses. To call a consciousness 'positional', for Sartre, is to say that 'it transcends itself in order to reach an object' (B&N: xxvii). The object posited in an experience is the object singled out, to which I 'direct my attention' (B&N: 95). Looking at a photograph of my friend Peter, for example, I may inspect the shapes and colours on the card,

or I may see it as an image of Peter. Only in the former case, according to Sartre, am I seeing the photograph: *it* is the object posited. In the latter case I am imagining Peter: *he* is the object posited (PI: 17-8). The positional character of a perceptual experience is its picking out of a part of mind-independent reality that is present in experience, the object intuited or known (*connue*), but in the case of imaginative experience such as imagining Peter with the aid of a photograph, the object posited is not the object intuited or known. This positional character of experience, as we saw in the introduction to this chapter, makes the part of the world posited (if there is one) available for demonstrative reference, and, as we also saw, this positionality is how Sartre understands intentionality. The object posited, the intentional object, is the object of attention, because ‘attention is intentional direction towards objects’ (B&N: 269).<sup>3</sup>

So where anglophone philosophers construe intentionality as representation and differ over whether such representation is independent of the objects represented, Sartre understands intentionality to be object-dependent because it is intuition or *connaissance* of an object. The object itself ('in person') figures in the experience (B&N: 172, 318), so the experience cannot occur without it. But this intuited object is not necessarily the object posited. If attention is focused on the intuited object, as it is in perception, then that object is the intentional object. But if attention is directed beyond the intuited object, to something depicted or symbolised by it, as it is in imaginative experience, then that depicted or symbolised object is the intentional object. The difference between the Sartrean and anglophone conceptions is due to their differing lines of descent from Brentano’s theory that the intentionality of ‘mental phenomena’ distinguishes them from ‘physical phenomena’, expressed in the following famous passage:

‘Every mental phenomenon is characterized by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object, and what we might call, though not

wholly unambiguously, reference to a content, direction toward an object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a thing), or immanent objectivity. Every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself, although they do not all do so in the same way. In presentation something is presented, in judgement something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired, and so on.

This intentional in-existence is characteristic exclusively of mental phenomena. No physical phenomenon exhibits anything like it. We can, therefore, define mental phenomena by saying that they are those phenomena which contain an object intentionally within themselves.' (Brentano 1995, 88).

There are two important facts about Brentano's *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, from which this passage is taken, that must be borne in mind when interpreting this passage: Brentano was interested in psychology which he defined as 'the science of the soul', and so was concerned with mental states or events themselves, not with the question of their relation to the rest of reality (see 1995, 3-5); and he claimed that 'experience alone is my teacher' (1995, xxvii). He uses the term 'phenomena' to refer to items within the mind that we directly experience (1995, 78). There are two sorts of experience, he claims: 'inner perception' of 'mental phenomena', and 'outer perception' of 'physical phenomena'. Examples of mental phenomena are listed in the above passage: the basic form is 'presenting', which is simply awareness of something; more sophisticated forms involve making a judgement about, or taking up an attitude such as love or hate toward, the presented entity. Physical phenomena, on the other hand, are what are presented in ordinary, unreflective experience: they are mind-dependent appearances contained within mental phenomena.<sup>4</sup> The mind-dependence of physical phenomena is most obvious from Brentano's Humean scepticism of the senses: 'We have no right', he writes, 'to believe that the objects of so-

called external perception really exist as they appear to us. Indeed, they demonstrably do not exist outside of us. In contrast to that which really and truly exists, they are mere phenomena' (1995, 10; see 91). Again: 'We have no experience of that which truly exists, in and of itself, and that which we do experience is not true. The truth of physical phenomena is, as they say, only a relative truth' (1995, 19). The first sentence of this last quotation is a little misleading, however, since Brentano takes us to be aware of mental as well as physical phenomena, and mental phenomena he claims *are* part of reality: 'mental phenomena ... are those phenomena which alone possess real existence as well as intentional existence. Knowledge, joy and desire really exist. Colour, sound and warmth have only a phenomenal and intentional existence' (1995, 92). Physical phenomena, then, are mind-dependent, 'can exist only phenomenally' (1995, vii), which is why Brentano considers them present in imagination as well as perception (1995, 79-80) and why he claims in the famous paragraph that they are *always* present in judgement, love, hate, and desire regardless of whether my judgement is true or false, or whether there is any part of mind-independent reality that fits my love, hate, or desire.

Brentano's thesis, then, is that a mental state or event comprises a mental phenomenon that contains and is directed towards a physical phenomenon that is dependent on that mental phenomenon.<sup>5</sup> Physical phenomena, for Brentano, are not directed on anything. Whether or not they represent things in mind-independent reality is not an issue with which Brentano is concerned, and he is happy to concede on grounds of Humean scepticism that it may not be possible to settle it.

Although anglophone philosophers often mention Brentano in their discussions of intentionality, the anglophone conception of intentionality as the property of representing a possible state of affairs is derived from Brentano's thesis only indirectly. The term 'intentionality' was introduced into anglophone philosophy by Chisholm, who intended to explain Brentano's

thesis but misunderstood and thereby misrepresented it. Chisholm made two mistakes. First, he failed to notice that mental and physical phenomena are, for Brentano, components of mental states or events; instead, he understood mental phenomena to be mental states or events, and physical phenomena to be mind-independent objects, states, or events. Second, he conflated intentionality with the logical notion of intensionality. A sentence is intensional only if: (i) the substitution of one of its terms with a co-referring term does not always preserve the statement's truth value; and (ii) we cannot infer from the truth of the statement that all of the terms refer to existent entities. The statement 'John believes that the masked man is responsible' is intensional, since: (i) if the masked man is John's brother, it does not follow that 'John believes that John's brother is responsible' (John might not believe that the masked man is his brother); and (ii) it does not entail that the masked man exists. Chisholm considered Brentano to have been most interested in the latter aspect of intensional statements. Chisholm's two mistakes led him to read Brentano's thesis as the claim that the objects of mental states or events need not exist whereas the objects of physical events must exist. 'We can desire or think about horses that do not exist,' he explained, 'but we can ride only those that do' (1960, 4; see also 1956, 125; 1957, 169). When I think about a particular horse, on Chisholm's reading of Brentano, I think about a really existing physical object, but when I think about a unicorn the object of my thought has mere 'intentional inexistence'. Where this term actually refers to the type of existence had by a mind-dependent entity, and Brentano considered *all* thought to involve such entities, Chisholm takes Brentano to be claiming that 'intentional inexistence' is the ontological status of non-existent objects of thought (see 1967a, 365; 1967b, 201; 1996, 115-9).<sup>6</sup>

The conception of intentionality that Chisholm introduced into anglophone philosophy was, then, the conception of mental representation or reference by another name, the new name being supposed to reflect the intensionality of mental states or events. It was talk of intentionality in this sense that Quine considered to be no part of scientific attempts to formulate fundamental laws

and to illuminate the true and ultimate structure of reality, although perhaps useful in daily life (1960, § 43-5). And it was intentionality in this sense that was fiercely debated by post-Quinean anglophone philosophers for more than two decades (a debate well charted by Fodor (1985) and Dennett (1987)).<sup>7</sup> The influence of this debate led Danto to explicate Sartre's notion of intentionality in terms of intensionality despite the fact that, as Danto admits, Sartre was not interested in the logical peculiarities of psychological state ascriptions (Danto 1991, 39-40; first published: 1975). This confusion of intentionality and intensionality continued until 1983, when Searle proclaimed:

‘One of the most pervasive confusions in contemporary philosophy is the mistaken belief that there is some close connection, perhaps even an identity, between intensionality-with-an-s and Intentionality-with-a-t. ... [it] derives from a mistake that is apparently endemic to the methods of linguistic philosophy - confusion of features of reports with features of things reported’ (Searle 1983, 24).

Mental events, claims Searle, are intentional because they are representational; reports of mental events are intensional because they do not commit themselves to the correctness of the representation they report. When the masked man is John's brother, John's thought that the masked man is responsible makes a claim about his brother whether he knows it or not; but the *report* ‘John thinks the masked man is responsible’ aims to capture the role John's belief plays in his mental economy and so does not entail ‘John thinks his brother is responsible’. Similarly, John's thought about the masked man entails the claim that there is a masked man, since John's thought can be true only if there is a masked man, but the *report* ‘John thinks that the masked man is responsible’ entails only that John has a certain thought and makes no claim about the masked man. The confusion of properties of mental states or events with properties of reports of mental states or events is aided and abetted, Searle claims, by the fact that the reports need not be linguistic

reports: they may be second-order mental states or events (1983, 22-6 and ch. 7).

By separating intensionality from intentionality, Searle preserved only one part of Chisholm's conception of intentionality: representation. No longer intensional, mental states or events are taken to be intentional in the sense of representing entities or objects other than themselves. The problems of intentionality now discussed by anglophone philosophers are the problems of how one part of the natural world can represent another, and how we are to construe representation when existent and non-existent things can equally be represented. This conception of intentionality remains, however, significantly different from Brentano's on at least two counts. First, Brentano was concerned with an intra-mental relationship between two parts of a mental state or event (although he did not frame his work in those terms) whereas the current anglophone concern is with the extra-mental relation between a mental state or event and a part of reality. Second, Brentano considered intentionality to be one part of a mental state or event being *directed toward* the other without any mention of representation. Sartre's conception of intentionality is derived from this Brentanian conception via Husserl, and the differences between Sartre's conception and the current anglophone conception are due to this differing heritage.<sup>8</sup>

Husserl's basic innovation in the theory of intentionality was to claim that mental phenomena in Brentano's sense are not directed on mind-dependent objects at all, but on transcendent objects — entities that are not contained within the mental phenomena directed on them. In *Logical Investigations*, Husserl objects to the 'box-within-box structure' of Brentanian intentionality, claiming that the mind is directed not toward a mental entity but toward an extra-mental entity that may or may not exist. Husserl does not deny the presence of mind-dependent appearances in intentional experiences, but denies that such appearances are the objects of experiences. Mind-dependent appearances, he claims, 'are not themselves intended, not the

objects presented in the act. I do not see colour-sensations but coloured things' (1970, Inv. V § 11). After the transcendental turn, from *Ideas* onwards, he presented roughly the same picture in new terminology. An experience consists in mind-dependent matter (*hylé*) and a set of intentions directed on the object (*morphé*). Some of the intentions are 'fulfilled' (*Erfüllt*) by matter, some are not. When I see a table, on this account, I intend many different aspects of the table such as its nearside and its farside. Those intentions that aim at the nearside of the table are fulfilled, those that aim at the farside are not. The single act consisting of many intentions is aimed at the table as a whole, and since some of the intentions are unfulfilled the table is not wholly contained within the act (1982, §§ 128-135; 1950, § 28).

Sartre agrees with Husserl that mental phenomena are directed toward transcendent objects but rejects mind-dependent appearances. In Sartre's view, these appearances can only shield an external world lying beyond them (indirect realism) or be part of a world that is then ultimately mind-dependent (phenomenalism), and Sartre rejects both of these possibilities (see chapter 2). Where Brentanian intentionality is directedness on a mind-dependent object and Husserlian intentionality is a surpassing of mind-dependent objects towards a transcendent object, Sartrean intentionality is just directedness towards an object without the aid of mind-dependent objects (see B&N: 178). In perception, the mind-independent object present to consciousness, intuited and known (*connue*), is the object of intentionality: it is the entity to which attention is paid, and which is posited. Perceiving a photograph, for example, I pay attention to the photograph itself, to its shapes and colours; it is the intentional object. If I surpass this object in the way the Husserl argues mind-dependent objects (*hylé*) are surpassed, and direct my attention to the object or person depicted in the photograph, then I am no longer perceiving: I am imagining, and that object or person is the intentional object of my imagination (PI: 17-8). The intentional object is always the object posited.

Sartrean intentionality, then, involves apprehension of a part of mind-independent reality that may be attended to (perception) or surpassed toward some absent object (imagination). The intentionality of perception is the positing of, the directing of attention toward, the mind-independent object intuited and known (*connue*). It is not, as it is for most current anglophone theorists, an entirely self-contained experience's property of representing something other than itself; and it is not, as it is for McDowell, an object-dependent representation of that object. *It is not representation*. As a result, the two problems of intentionality faced by the anglophone conception are not faced by Sartre's conception. These are the problems of how we are to understand the notion of representation when both existent and non-existent things can be represented, and how it is that representation can arise in the natural world. Sartre's conception faces instead the parallel problems of accounting for non-perceptual experience (e.g. hallucination) within the confines of this conception of intentionality, and fitting the intentional direction of experience into the natural world. These are the topics of chapters 3 and 4.

## **1.2 Nonpositional Awareness and the Unity of Consciousness**

In addition to positional awareness of a part of the world, or intentional direction toward a part of the world, Sartre considers perceptual experience to involve what he terms 'nonpositional awareness', a form of awareness that does not involve attending to a specific object. A token perceptual experience, for Sartre, is 'a synthetic unity of a multiplicity of appearances' (PI: 7); only one member of this multiplicity involves positing an object, the others are nonpositional. The aim of this section is to clarify Sartre's theory of the relation between positional and nonpositional awareness in order to pave the way for a discussion of Sartre's closely related theory of 'thetic' and 'nonthetic' awareness. Before going on to discuss positional and nonpositional awareness, however, it is important to clarify Sartre's notion of the synthetic unity of consciousness.

Sartre uses the term ‘consciousness’ in two different senses. In the *narrow* sense (e.g. B&N: xxvii), it is simply awareness of something. There are two varieties of this awareness. Positional awareness is, as we have seen (1.1), intentional direction towards an object, which is the same as paying attention to that object. Nonpositional awareness, on the other hand, does not involve paying attention and is awareness of something other than an intentional object. I am now paying attention to a computer screen, for example. In Sartre’s terms, the screen is the intentional object that I posit, but I am also nonpositionally aware of various other features of the scene that contains the screen. In Sartre’s *broad* sense of ‘consciousness’ (e.g. B&N: 317), I am conscious of the whole scene: of the screen posited and of its surroundings, the sounds in the street outside, the seated position of my body, and various other things that I am only nonpositionally aware of. Sartre’s theory of pre-reflective self-awareness is the view that every consciousness in the broad sense involves a nonpositional awareness of that consciousness as well as other awarenesses (B&N: xxx). To avoid confusion, I use the term ‘awareness’ for the narrow sense of Sartre’s ‘consciousness’, and ‘consciousness’ for his broad sense of ‘consciousness’.

Sartre’s discussions of the synthetic unity of consciousness involve two senses of ‘synthetic unity’. First, there is synthesis of diverse simultaneous awarenesses: consciousnesses in Sartre’s narrow sense (awarenesses) are synthesised into a consciousness in the broad sense (TE: 38; PI: 5). Second, there is synthesis of these consciousnesses in the broad sense with one another over time: consciousnesses in the broad sense are synthesised into a continuous flow of consciousness, an enduring mind (TE: 39; PI: 14). This second form of synthesis is not a concern of this thesis, and so will be ignored; I will use the phrase ‘synthetic unity’ only in the first of these senses.<sup>9</sup>

Sartre’s notion of the synthetic unity of consciousness should not be confused with the Cartesian notion of the indivisibility of the mental (Descartes 1984,

59). Aside from the fact that Sartre denies that there is a Cartesian, Kantian, or Husserlian transcendental ego responsible for unifying experience (TE: 32-60; B&N: 235), there is no reason to equate synthetic unity with Cartesian indivisibility since there is no reason to suppose that the synthetically united parts cannot be disconnected from one another. One popular argument against Cartesian indivisibility of the mental concerns so-called ‘split-brain’ cases: the severing of the corpus callosum which connects the two hemispheres of the brain results, under certain carefully constructed experimental conditions, in the prevention of communication between the two hemispheres and the concomitant phenomenon of a ‘split-mind’ — what seems, on behavioural evidence, to be two independent centres of consciousness within a single human being (Nagel 1971, 392-402). Sartre’s notion of the *synthetic* unity of consciousness, however, seems positively supported by the split-brain experiments: under certain conditions, the two hemispheres of the brain cannot communicate and so the diverse psychic elements (or awarenesses) cannot be synthesised into a single experience (consciousness). That is, the difference between the split brain patient under experimental conditions and a normal individual is that the latter, but not the former, can and does synthesise distinct but simultaneous awarenesses into one single consciousness (as Nagel (1971, 409-11) suggests). The split brain patient under experimental conditions, it seems, synthesises awarenesses into two distinct consciousnesses.<sup>10</sup>

Sartre’s claim that ‘there is no consciousness which is not a *positing* of a transcendent object’ (B&N: xxvii), therefore, is not contradicted by his claim that there are nonpositional forms of awareness (B&N: xxx). Every synthetically united consciousness (consciousness in the broad sense) involves positional awareness of an intentional object along with nonpositional awareness. Sartre claims that there can be only one positional awareness. The object of positional awareness, the ‘this’ (see 1.1), he claims, ‘is revealed as “this” by “a withdrawal into the ground of the world of all the other “thises”” (B&N: 183). Moreover:

‘The original relation of the *thises* to one another can be neither interaction nor causality nor even the upsurge on the same ground of the world. If we suppose that the *For-itself* is present to one (*un*) *this*, the other *thises* exist at the same time “in the world” but by virtue of being undifferentiated; they constitute the ground on which the *this* confronted is raised in relief’ (B&N: 189)

Every consciousness in the broad sense, then, is a synthetic unity of one positional awareness with nonpositional awarenesses. Sartre links this to the figure / ground distinction of Gestalt psychology:

‘we must observe that in perception there is always the construction of a figure on a ground. No one object, no group of objects is especially designed to be organized as specifically either ground or figure; all depends on the direction of my attention ... the ground is that which is seen only in addition, that which is the object of a purely marginal attention.’ (B&N: 9-10; compare B&N: 332).

I am positionally aware of a figure, the object of attention, and nonpositionally aware of the ground (B&N: 94-5). Where Gestalt theory typically restricts the figure / ground distinction to within each sensory modality (see Katz 1951, 31), Sartre generalises it across the whole conscious range: all sensory modalities, imagination, mathematical thought, etc.; where Searle (1992) distinguishes the ‘figure-ground distinction’ (132-3) from the ‘centre-periphery distinction’ (137-9), Sartre construes the figure as that which is at the centre of consciousness, the ground is all that I am only peripherally aware of. The ground of which we are aware in this way is described by Sartre as an ‘evanescence’, ‘an undifferentiated totality’, and ‘the background’ (B&N: 10). Looking for my friend Pierre, whose face is well known to me, in a café

requires focusing attention on each person in the café to determine whether or not that person is Pierre: my background awareness of the café accompanying, say, my positional awareness of a newspaper cannot allow me to tell whether any of the faces in the café is that of my friend Pierre (B&N: 10).<sup>11</sup> When I become aware that another conscious being is looking at me, according to Sartre, I become positionally aware of the other's look and the whole perceivable world thereby becomes the ground on which the look stands as figure (B&N: 258, 266).

As well as reserving the term 'intentionality' for the directing of attention that is positional awareness, Sartre marks the distinction between positional and nonpositional awareness in *Being and Nothingness* by italicising the 'of' of intentionality in the phrase 'consciousness *of* ...' for *positional* awareness, and bracketing 'of' in the phrase 'consciousness (of) ...' for *nonpositional* awareness. This bracketing is designed to emphasise the fact that the 'of' in reports of nonpositional awareness is not the 'of' of intentionality, but 'merely satisfies a grammatical requirement' (B&N: xxx).

Sartre does not consider objects themselves to determine whether they are seen as the figure or as part of the ground. A figure is demarcated from its ground by 'a limiting cutting into being' or 'individualizing limitation' (B&N: 8) introduced by consciousness. This demarcation is the basic form of negation. To pick something out as a figure is simply to deny that it is any of the surrounding entities (B&N: 24); 'in perception we constitute a particular object as a *figure* by rejecting another so as to make of it a *ground*, and conversely' (B&N: 20). As a result 'this particular being can be called *this* only on the ground of the presence of *all* being' (B&N: 180). Positional awareness of the figure, therefore, requires nonpositional awareness of the ground. A figure is one example of what Sartre calls '*négatités*'. This neologism picks out:

'realities which are not only objects of judgement, but which are experienced, opposed, feared, etc., by the human being and

which in their inner structure are inhabited by negation, as by a necessary condition of their existence' (B&N: 21).

The figure is a *négatité* since it is determined as a 'this' by a negation of the ground; '*négatités* ... retain negation as the condition of the sharpness of their outlines, as that which fixes them as what they are' (B&N: 21). When a figure arises on the ground, 'its determination ... is a negation' (B&N: 183). 'Negativity ... causes a *this* to exist' (B&N: 180); demarcation requires negation.

Scholars are divided over how to interpret this claim. Wider (1990, 346), for example, claims that consciousness 'creates differences within being ... [it] pulls the figure out from the ground ... [and thereby] makes this figure not be the ground and not be other figures pulled out from the flat ground'. This sounds as though Sartre claims that being in-itself would be an undifferentiated mass had consciousness not arisen and organised it into separate entities. That is, Wider seems to ascribe to Sartre a form of structural idealism according to which mind-independent reality gains its structures from the way in which I am (or other conscious beings are) aware of it (see Wider 1990, 338 and 343). On this reading, Sartre is *not* claiming that the apparent structures of the world are structures only of our thought and awareness, but that reality has *become* structured through being the object of consciousness just as a sheet of pastry is cut up by a pastry cutter. But this reading is incompatible with Sartre's claims that:

'we can not imagine that the For-itself effects distorting synthetic negations among transcendentals that it is not' (B&N: 185)

'this negation — looking at the *this* — is wholly ideal. It adds nothing to being and subtracts nothing from it. The being confronted as "this" is what it is and does not cease being it; it

does not become' (B&N: 183; see also 179, 186-7, 191-2, 197, 217)<sup>12</sup>

Sartre's insistence that consciousness does not change being leads McCulloch to ascribe structural realism to Sartre (1994, 111-7). According to McCulloch's reading of Sartre, when I pick out a table as a figure on the ground of the world I do so because the table already is a single entity distinct from its background, and when I focus on a property of an object, such as its yellowness or roughness (B&N: 186), I do so because that property is already distinct from the rest of the scene. But it is not clear how this realism is compatible with Sartre's claim that the demarcation of a figure 'is wholly ideal' (B&N: 186): on McCulloch's reading the demarcation is wholly real. Moreover, given Sartre's claim that there can be only one posited object in any one consciousness (B&N: 183, 189) and his talk of a 'group of objects' being seen as figure on a ground (B&N: 9), his discussion of seeing a number of objects at once (B&N: 191-2) should be understood as involving the claim that a number of distinct entities can be grouped together as a single figure, a single 'this', what Husserl called 'a phenomenally unitary group' (1950, § 51). Since Sartre thinks that I can pick out a group of separate entities, such as three people engaged in a conversation, as a figure, it seems that he cannot also hold that picking out a figure requires that figure to be a unitary entity in any mind-independent sense.

McCulloch (1994, 116) seems to think his reading is necessitated by Sartre's repeated claim that consciousness makes no difference to being, but it is not. Segment S in Figure 1 below, for example, has been demarcated from an undifferentiated line L, was not separated from L before the dotted lines were drawn, and is not separated from L by the superimposition of the dotted line: neither S nor L has changed in any way by the demarcation, yet S is not an entity distinct from its background, the rest of L.

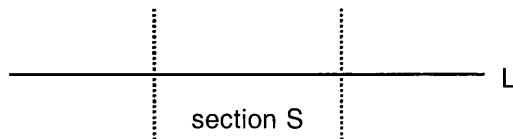


Figure 1

There is a third way between McCulloch and Wider on this issue. Sartrean demarcation of objects, according to Danto (1991, ch. 1) and Baldwin (1996, 86), is akin to the demarcation of segment S in Figure 1: being in-itself is unstructured and remains unstructured when I posit a figure since the demarcation of the figure is purely phenomenological or subjective, a demarcation-for-me and no more. This reading seems to be supported by Sartre's claim that since the figure is a region of being in-itself demarcated by a relation of negation (*this* is *not-that*) and since only consciousness is of its own nature relational, the figure cannot by its own nature be demarcated from the ground. For this reason, negation 'does not belong to the *this*. ... The determinative relation of the *this* therefore can neither belong to the *this* nor to the *that*; it enfolds them without touching them, without conferring on them the slightest trace of a new character; it leaves them for what they are' (B&N: 185). This reading may, however, seem threatened by:

'the external negation constitutive of the *this* can not appear as an *objective* characteristic of the thing, if we understand by objective that which by nature belongs to the in-itself — or that which in one way or another *really* (*réellement*) constitutes the object as it is' (B&N: 185).

On Danto's and Baldwin's view of Sartre, the demarcation of a 'this' does appear as the boundary of a singular unitary entity distinct from its surroundings. This is what it means to describe the demarcation as a demarcation-for-me. But this reading is not, despite appearances, in conflict with the above quotation, for on this reading the demarcation appears to

consciousness as part of the structure of *the world* where Sartre is denying only that it appears as part of the structure of *being in-itself*. The world is the environment that consciousness constructs for itself out of being in-itself (see 1.3); the demarcation of a figure is a part of the construction this world, even though it is not part of the nature of being in-itself, on this reading.

The exegetical issue of the precise nature of the relation between 'world' and 'being in-itself' in Sartre's work is, of course, the issue of Sartre's position in relation to semantic and structural forms of realism and idealism. It cannot be settled without consideration of his theory of 'thetic' and 'nonthetic' components of consciousness, discussed in the rest of this chapter, or without consideration of the ontology underlying Sartre's whole theory of consciousness, discussed in chapter 4. But what is clear from the foregoing is that Sartre considers perception to present the perceiver with 'an undifferentiated totality' (B&N: 10) of being as ground, of which the perceiver is nonpositionally aware, and that on this ground the perceiver is positionally aware of a figure. If *visual* attention is paid to an object, then the posited figure is the object of this visual attention, and so vision displays the figure-ground structure. If, on the other hand, attention is paid through some other sensory modality, or to some imaginary entity or to conceptual thought, then the figure is not a part of the *seen* world, and vision provides only ground. The rest of this chapter is concerned with the relation between 'thetic' and 'nonthetic' awareness where vision displays the figure-ground structure.

### 1.3 Thetic Awareness and Intentional Content

An act of consciousness, for Sartre, has a thetic character. Sartre, typically, does not provide a definition of his term 'thetic' (*thetique*), simply adopting it from Husserl as part of the stock terminology of phenomenology. For Husserl, the *thetischen* character of a conscious act is equivalent to its *Setzungs* character: thetic = positional (e.g. 1982, § 129). But Husserl's notion of the

positional character of consciousness is broader than Sartre's: where for Sartre positing is just picking out an object of awareness, for Husserl it is picking out an object and understanding it in a certain way — such as existing or not existing, for example, or being good or beautiful (see 1.1). The thetic component of experience in Sartre's theory of consciousness is roughly the aspect of Husserl's notion of the positional character of awareness that is missing from Sartre's notion of positing. The thetic component of an act of consciousness, for Sartre, consists in a thesis or proposition (*thèse*) about the object posited (B&N: 90); it is the set of ways in which the object is understood. For example:

‘In the case of the perception of the chair, there is a thesis — that is, the apprehension and affirmation of the chair as the in-itself which consciousness is not’ (B&N: 140).

Perception involves, for Sartre, positing the seen object as present and existing; the thetic component of perception, that is, represents the object posited as present and existing.<sup>13</sup> Sartre calls the components of the thetic component of awareness ‘determinations’: determinations are the category headings that the thetic component of a consciousness classifies its object under; they are the way the object is intended (compare Husserl 1970, Inv. V § 17). The thetic component of perceptual experience, according to Sartre, ascribes the determinations ‘present’ and ‘existent’ to its object. But the thetic character of perceptual experience is by no means restricted to this. There are, for Sartre, two further varieties of determination that can be involved in the thetic component of a perceptual experience.

The first variety track what Sartre calls the ‘qualities’ of the object. Perceiving a pool, for example, involves awareness of qualities such as ‘[t]he fluidity, the tepidity, the bluish colour, the undulating restlessness of the water in the pool’ (B&N: 186). Each of these qualities of the pool may or may not be referred to in the thetic component of my awareness of the pool. If the pool is *seen as*

fluid, blue, or restless, then these are the determinations ascribed to the pool in my experience. The various qualities of the object are undifferentiated in experience unless the experience contains corresponding determinations, so the qualities of the ground remain undifferentiated as may qualities of the figure (B&N: 188). Sartre often talks of the *thetic* component of experience in terms of the ‘intentions’ of that experience: the determinations are the way in which the object is intended, the way it is presented in intentional experience. Using this terminology, he explains that in any given visual perception there are intentions that are ‘motivated’ by the seen qualities of the object, and others that are not (B&N: 26-7); some *thetic* determinations track the object’s qualities, others do not.

The second variety of determination is of more interest to Sartre, for determinations of this sort are motivated by the aims and projects of the perceiver. This claim is at the heart of Sartrean existentialism, since it grounds the claim that an individual’s project provides the lens through which that individual experiences being in-itself as a world of tools, obstacles, and values. My attempt to realise one of my possibilities is partly responsible for way reality seems to me: ‘this projection of myself toward an original possibility ... causes the existence of values, appeals, expectations, and in general a world’ (B&N: 39); ‘perception is in no way to be distinguished from the practical organisation of existents into a world’ (B&N: 321). The ‘world’, for Sartre, is not the mass of being in-itself but the complex of instruments and values that appears to consciousness (B&N: 24, 139, 617-8). Mere chunks of being in-itself are thus experienced as tools or obstacles, as themselves having ‘potentialities’ in relation to my projects: ‘the order of instruments in the world is the image of my possibilities projected into the in-itself; that is, the image of what I am’ (B&N: 292). If an object appears as an obstacle to fulfilling a project, it does not limit my freedom, for example, since it is *only* an obstacle because of the project I have freely chosen to pursue (B&N: 504-9). This is what Sartre refers to as ‘the potentializing structure of perception’ (B&N: 197): the fact that being in-itself is perceived as a world of tools,

obstacles, and values relating to my projects (see also B&N: 199). This relation between projects and the experienced structure of the world is captured in the key existentialist term ‘situation’. Sartre introduces this term in his discussion of the project of looking through a keyhole to observe a scene, claiming that ‘there is a spectacle to be seen behind the door only because I am jealous, but my jealousy is nothing except the simple objective fact that *there is a sight to be seen* behind the door’ (B&N: 259). Being jealous and experiencing being in-itself as structured in this way are one and the same (compare STE: part III; Husserl 1970, Inv. V § 15). This ‘situation’ is the combination of facts about the environment, such as the existence of a door with a keyhole, with facts about my aims and projects, such as my wish to see the scene beyond the door: a situation always involves determinations imposed by the projects of the situated individual as well as those that track the qualities of the individual’s immediate environment.<sup>14</sup>

The thetic component of experience, and the two varieties of determination it involves, is what Sartre is alluding to when he describes seeing a figure as making it ‘the object of a detailed attention’ (B&N: 95). The term translated as ‘detailed’ is ‘*circonstanciée*’ which implies appropriateness to the circumstances. Both varieties of determination are ideally appropriate to the circumstances, but can fail to be. The determination ‘clear’ is appropriate to a glass of water in that it refers to a manifest quality of the object, but if I am thirsty the determination ‘inviting’ is also appropriate to the object in a way that it would not be if the glass was empty. So when Sartre talks of only the first sort of determinations being ‘motivated’ by the qualities of the object (B&N: 27), he is best understood as claiming that only the first sort are motivated *purely* by the qualities of the object: the second sort are motivated by qualities plus the seer’s aims and projects.

Determinations of both varieties, moreover, are experienced as real parts of the world: ‘the man who is angry sees on the face of his opponent the objective quality of asking for a punch on the nose’ (B&N: 163; compare STE:

part III; B&N: 55, 263). Sartre's clearest discussion of this point is in terms of values: although 'it is I who sustain values in being' (B&N: 39), these values are part of the way in which I experience reality and so part of my world: 'there exist concretely alarm clocks, signboards, tax forms, policemen, so many guard rails against anguish' (B&N: 39). These are experienced as having meaning and value in themselves, despite the fact that I am 'the one who gives its meaning to the alarm clock, the one who by a signboard forbids himself to walk on a flower bed or on the lawn, the one from whom the boss's order borrows its urgency, the one who decides the interest of the book which he is writing, the one finally who makes the values exist in order to determine his action by their demands' (B&N: 39). Refusal to recognise the centrifugal nature of values, their emanation from the valuer, is a major form of bad faith, curable only by 'pure reflection' on the nature of valuing (see 0.3). In unreflective experience, values are immediately experienced as real parts of the world; they 'are sown on my path as thousands of little real demands, like the signs which order us to keep off the grass' (B&N: 38).

In short, then, Sartre's distinction between nonthetic and thetic components of awareness, between qualities and determinations, is similar to the distinction between the properties of an object and the predicates we apply to the object. There is one difference, however: a predicate is usually taken to be a word whereas Sartrean determinations are not linguistic. Linguistic meaning, for Sartre, exists only 'virtually and socially. It exists for the grammarian, the logician, the sociologist. But the psychologist need not concern himself with it because he will never find an equivalent, either in consciousness, or in some parlous unconscious invented to meet the situation' (IPC: 72).<sup>15</sup>

The parallel of Sartre's distinction in current anglophone philosophy is not the distinction between conceptual and nonconceptual representational content (e.g. Crane 1992), but rather the distinction between representational (intentional) content and nonrepresentational qualities or qualia (e.g. Peacocke 1983, ch. 1). To say that a component of experience is part of the

*representational content* of that experience is to say that it makes a claim about the subject's immediate environment, and therefore can be correct or incorrect (Crane 1992, 139; Peacocke 1992, 105-10). Sartre's conception of 'nonthetic' components of experience, or qualities, is not akin to the nonconceptual content of current anglophone philosophy: it is not a form of representational content. Rather, the nonthetic component of an experience is the set of sensory qualities of the visual field that do not represent parts of the world (B&N: 186). They are similar to the 'part-contents' of visual experience that Husserl claimed 'are neither referred to, nor intentionally objective, in the whole' (1970, Inv. V § 10). They do not represent an object (are not 'objective' (*Objectiv*) in Husserl's sense), and need not be referred to by thetic determinations (though they may be): they are not representations and need not be represented, but are simply present in experience. Sartre gives the yellowness and sourness of a lemon as examples of qualities of which we have nonthetic awareness (B&N: 186): although these qualities may be matched by representations in the thetic component of the experience, this need not be the case for the qualities to be present in experience.

The intentionality of perception, then, has two aspects for Sartre: it is intuition of a part of mind-independent reality which is posited and attended to; and it has a specifiable content which presents that part of mind-independent reality in a certain way, content which is 'motivated' by the manifest qualities of the intuited object. This intentionality is knowledge (*connaissance*) of an object in the sense of intuition of it (e.g. B&N: 333) and knowledge (*savoir*) that it falls under certain determinations (e.g. B&N: 69).<sup>16</sup> Most continental European philosophers since Kant who have considered the relation between mind and world have this picture of experience, differing only over two issues: whether appearances are mind-dependent or whether they involve mind-independent reality; and the nature of the determinations involved in experience. On the 'two-object' reading of Kant's distinction between phenomenal and noumenal realities, Kant claims that appearances are mind-dependent, and on the 'two-component' reading he claims that they involve a part of mind-independent

reality; on either reading, he considers experience to be structured by a priori categories of understanding that are present in all human experience (see 2.2). Nietzsche is unclear over the first of these issues, but is emphatic that the structures of experience are not a product of the structures of human thought. Instead, he claims, it is the will to power that 'creates the world in its own image' (1998, § 9). Husserl claims that the '*hyle*' of experience is mind-dependent, and considers the '*morphe*' that structures experience to be a function of thought about objects and reality (see 1.1 and 2.2). Sartre follows Heidegger in rejecting Husserl's mind-dependent *hylé* in favour of mind-independent reality as the object of acquaintance (Heidegger 1962, § 7) and in claiming that the *morphe* is to some extent a function of the perceiver's projects (1962, § 15).

The issues of whether Sartre is a structural realist or idealist and of whether Sartre is a semantic realist or idealist (see 0.4) cannot be settled without a thorough investigation of the relations between thetic and nonthetic components of experience, and between nonthetic components of experience and being in-itself. But we can note two preliminary points at this stage. First, Sartre's view that the object has manifest qualities seems to indicate structural realism: how can two scenarios *seem* different unless they *are* different? This point does not only apply to Sartre's position: on *any* theory of perception, it must be admitted that different parts of reality appear to us differently, and it is not clear how this could be the case unless the parts of reality in question differ from one another in some way. (This seems to me to be the basic point underlying the intuitive appeal of structural realism.) Second, the question of whether Sartre is a semantic realist or idealist should not be understood as a question about Sartre's view of words or of concepts, but as a question about the determinations of experience (be they linguistic, conceptual, or whatever). The question is whether determinations do, or at least can, carve reality at the joints.

Before returning to these two issues, the rest of this chapter is concerned with assessing the overall view of perceptual experience that has emerged from the foregoing three sections. This is the view that perception consists in an experience which involves paying attention to, being intentionally directed on, a part of the immediate environment demarcated as a figure, and a background awareness of the ground on which this figure stands. The thetic component of experience consists in a set of determinations, each of which makes a claim about the figure which can be assessed for appropriateness. The nonthetic component of the experience consists in the aspects of the experience of the figure that are nonrepresentational, plus the experience of the ground, which is entirely nonrepresentational. This picture of perception is highly controversial. Opposing Sartre's view are anglophone philosophers who claim that there is no nonconceptual component to perception at all (e.g. McDowell 1994, ch. 3) and those who claim that the nonconceptual component of experience is a form of representational content (e.g. Evans 1982, 122-9; Crane 1992). The challenge to Sartre's theory that arises from the anglophone debate concerns the role nonthetic awareness is supposed to play in the overall mental economy of the perceiver. If the qualia of which we have nonthetic awareness make no difference to us, then there is no point postulating them in a theory of awareness, for two reasons: first, we would have no way of detecting them and so there would be no reason to believe that they occur (see Dennett 1991, 403-4; Kirk 1999, § 3); second, an explanatorily irrelevant postulate can be excised from a theory without effecting the overall explanatory power of that theory (see Kim 1998, 119). Just specifying an explanatory role for qualia is not enough, however, if it allows an opponent to argue that the explanatory role in question is in fact occupied by some aspect of representational content (see Dennett 1988 and 1991, ch. 12; Tye 1992).

So Sartre's theory of phenomenal consciousness must be defended by specifying at least one explanatory role that can be filled by qualia and not by representational content, by qualities but not determinations, by nonthetic

awareness but not by thetic awareness. Sartre in fact provides two sets of roles: there are contributions purportedly made to mental life by nonthetic background awareness; and there is a contribution purportedly made by nonthetic awareness of aspects of the figure posited. If it can be maintained that either of these contributions requires nonthetic awareness, then Sartre will have given good reason to postulate nonthetic awareness in phenomenal consciousness as well as thetic awareness, qualia as well as content. The next two sections will investigate whether Sartre's claims about the explanatory roles of nonthetic awareness can be maintained, or whether those roles seem rather to be played by thetic awareness. This investigation will license conclusions about the extent to which Sartre's theory of thetic and nonthetic awareness is of interest to current anglophone philosophers of perception, and about structural and semantic realism in Sartre's philosophy.

#### **1.4 Nonthetic Awareness and Ground**

Sartre claims that when reading a book,

'no matter how absorbed I am in my reading ... I do not lose sight of the colours, the movements which surround me, I do not cease to hear sounds; they are simply lost in the undifferentiated totality which serves as the background for my reading' (B&N: 334).

It is quite plausible to claim that there is always some background awareness of the world in addition to one's awareness of whatever it is one is attending to. Searle expresses this when he claims that 'it is a mistake to say that, for example, I am unconscious of the feeling of my shirt against my skin in the sense in which I am unconscious of the growth of my toenails' (1992, 138). But the fact that I am not unaware of the ground of awareness in the way that I am unaware of the growth of my toenails does not entail that I have any kind

of awareness of the ground *while* focusing on the figure. The difference may simply lie in the fact that I can turn my attention to aspects of the visual scene other than the current figure whereas I cannot turn my attention to the growth of my toenails. Indeed, it may be that I have no awareness of the background of my attention, but seem to have awareness of it only because I can rapidly shift my attention towards any aspect of it. 'We have the sense of actuality', perhaps, 'when every question asked of our visual systems is answered so swiftly that it seems as though those answers were already there' (Minsky 1985, 257). I may simply have no awareness of the ground of experience while focusing on the figure. What is required to show that we do indeed have such awareness is a role that awareness plays in our overall mental economy. But simply identifying such a role is not enough for Sartre's position: there must also be good reason to classify any background awareness playing that role as nonthetic rather than a form of thetic awareness. Sartre proposes two such roles, which I will discuss in turn.

Deliberately turning one's attention toward an entity to make it the object of positional thetic awareness, Sartre claims, requires prior nonthetic awareness of it. The ability to shift attention towards one's current consciousness and reflect on it, he claims, requires that one was already aware of it while it was current: deliberate thetic reflective self-awareness requires nonthetic pre-reflective self-awareness. Sartre couches this as a general claim about the relation between thetic and nonthetic awareness: deliberately turning attention towards something requires already having some awareness of it (PI: 188; B&N: xxix, 74).<sup>17</sup> In Sartre's favour, it is a familiar experience to catch sight of something out of the corner of one's eye and inquisitively to turn attention on it to see what it is. But that this is not best described as nonthetic awareness of the object is easily seen in an experiment using Figure 2, below. Holding the page about 15 cm (6 in) from your eyes, with the cross in front of the tip of your nose, and focusing attention on the cross, you can make the left spot disappear by closing your right eye and vice versa.

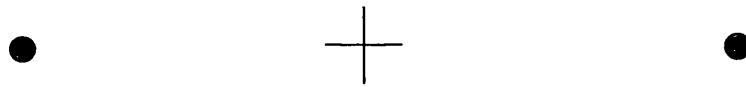


Figure 2

The awareness you have of the spots appearing and disappearing as you open and close each eye is obviously awareness of the ground of experience: it only works so long as attention is focused on the cross as figure. Yet during this experiment, and without ceasing to focus on the cross, you are aware not of an 'undifferentiated totality' (B&N: 10, 334) as background to the cross, but of a white background in which small black dots appear and disappear with the opening and closing of each eye. The awareness of the background, then, does not appear to be nonthetic but rather to classify it in certain ways. But this is not to say that our awareness of the figure is no more detailed than our awareness of the ground. Black dots are relatively simple to discriminate on a white background. More complex cases do seem to show that awareness of the ground is relatively vague:

'Take a deck of playing cards and remove a card face down, so that you do not yet know which it is. Hold it out at the left or right periphery of your visual field and turn its face to you, being careful to keep looking straight ahead (pick a target spot and keep looking right at it). You will find that you cannot tell even if it is red or black or a face card. Notice, though, that you are distinctly aware of any flicker of motion of the card. ... Now start moving the card toward the centre of your visual field ... At what point can you identify the color? At what point the suit and number? Notice that you can tell if it is a face card long before you can tell if it is a jack, queen, or king.' (Dennett 1991, 53-4; see also 361-2).

What these simple experiments suggest is that we have some thetic awareness of entities in the ground of visual experience, but that this awareness is not very discriminating. Turning visual attention towards an object that was previously in the ground (or, indeed, moving the object into the position of figure) does not seem to *introduce* thetic awareness of that object but *increase* it. ‘It is more like turning *up* the lights than turning them *on*’, as McCulloch (1994, 102) puts it. It seems that thetic awareness can be more or less detailed, can classify the seen entity under more or fewer determinations, depending on the distance from the centre of visual attention. Noticing whether a playing card is covered in red or black markings requires less discrimination than noticing which suit these markings are or how many they are. Moreover, if one could not at least differentiate an object in the ground of one’s experience from the rest of that ground, it seems that one could not deliberately turn attention to *that* object. This point, it seems to me, underlies the plausibility of the model of selective attention, currently dominant in information-processing theories of mind, as the selection of some undetailed information for further processing (see Eilan 1998, 192). It seems, then, that Sartre’s claim that nonthetic awareness enables one to deliberately turn attention towards an entity is false.

The second role Sartre ascribes to nonthetic awareness is that of affecting the thetic content of positional awareness: the way the figure is seen, according to Sartre, may be affected by nonthetic awareness of part of the background of awareness. He claims that if I am thirsty and see a glass of water: ‘The glass of water appears as about-to-be-drunk; that is, as the correlate of a thirst grasped non-thetically’ (B&N: 204). He makes a similar claim about the way the world is seen when I am non-thetically aware of my own projects and possibilities (B&N: 259).

Sartre’s claim that nonthetic awareness can affect thetic awareness is closely related to experimental psychologists’ concern with what they call ‘perception without awareness’ or ‘unconscious perception’. For over a hundred years

now (beginning with Peirce and Jastrow 1884), experimental psychologists have been investigating whether behaviour can be affected by perceptual information that cannot be reported by the subject. In one classic study (Maier 1932) subjects were asked to tie together the ends of two pieces of string that hung from the ceiling sufficiently far apart that holding the end of one piece of string precluded the subject from reaching the other one. There were various objects in the room which they were allowed to use. If the subject had not solved the problem after a certain amount of time, the experimenter would drop a hint by passing the light switch cord that also dangled from the ceiling and setting it in motion. Nineteen of the subjects solved the problem shortly after this hint was dropped by tying a heavy object to one of the pieces of string and setting it in motion while going to get the other one and returning to the centre of the room to catch the first one. Of these nineteen, six claimed that seeing the light cord swing provided the solution; the others claimed that to their knowledge they had not been aware of the light cord or if they had the solution was not cued by this. In Sartre's terms, it seems, nonthetic awareness of the swinging light cord affected these thirteen subjects' thetic awarenesses of the problem or of the pieces of string they were trying to tie together.

The Sartrean classification of the awareness these thirteen subjects had of the swinging lightcord as nonthetic is due to the subjects' inability to explain that their solution of the problem had been cued by the movement of the lightcord. Sartre, that is, considers the thetic structure of experience to be linguistically articulable. When he claims that our awareness of our own conscious activity is nonpositional nonthetic awareness, for example, he writes:

'Proof of this is that children who are capable of making an addition spontaneously cannot explain subsequently how they set about it. Piaget's tests, which show this, constitute an

excellent refutation of the formula of Alain — to know is to know that one knows (*Savoir, c'est savoir qu'on sait*)' (B&N: xxix)

But such experiments support the Sartrean claim that nonthetic awareness influences thetic awareness only given Sartre's presumption that thetic awareness is, at least usually, linguistically articulable. But this assumption is debatable. It is to avoid a parallel assumption that psychologists researching the possibility of unconscious perception have replaced experiments like Maier's with 'exclusion tasks'. Where Maier applied one test for perception (whether the swinging cord helped the subject to solve the puzzle) and another for consciousness of that perception (reportability), current experimenters ask subjects not to allow a certain cue to influence their behaviour. A subject aware of perceiving the cue will, they presume, be capable of obeying the instruction to ignore it; perception of the cue and lack of awareness of that perception are then both taken to be indicated by the same datum, the subject's failure to ignore the cue (Debner and Jacoby 1994; see Merikle and Joordens 1997, 109-13). The advantage of the exclusion task is that it allows for the possibility of conscious but unreportable perception, which experiments like Maier's overlook. Sartre's assumption that thetic awareness is, at least usually, linguistically articulable similarly overlooks the possibility of unreportable representational awareness.

This notion of unreportable thetic awareness, which Sartre overlooks, is akin to the notion of nonconceptual representational content discussed in current anglophone philosophy of mind. In this debate, concepts are taken to be the inferentially relevant constituents of beliefs and possessing a concept is understood as having a set of beliefs that are inferentially related to one another as a function of their contents, where the concept possessed is the constituent common to each belief in the set and responsible for the inferential relations between the beliefs. To possess the concept 'cat', that is, is to possess a set of inferentially related beliefs concerned with cats, such as the beliefs that cats are domestic pets, are tame, and are smaller than houses.

Without such a set of cat-beliefs, you cannot possess the concept ‘cat’. Philosophers who claim that experience has nonconceptual content claim that an experience that represents there being a cat on a mat can be had by someone who does not possess the concept ‘cat’; without, that is, having an inferentially related set of beliefs about cats. If experiences are composed of nonconceptual representational content, that is, then experiences do not themselves stand in inferential relations to beliefs; to stand in such inferential relations to beliefs is the same as being composed of concepts (see Crane 1992; McDowell 1994, ch. 1).

The fact that an individual cannot report the awareness that we attribute to that individual on other grounds, therefore, does not entail that the awareness in question is not representational; it shows at most only that it is not conceptual. If it were conceptual, then (in non-pathological cases) it would be rationally linked to beliefs about the object of awareness including (among subjects possessing the right concepts) the belief *that* it is an object of awareness. Sartre’s presumption, then, conflates representational with conceptual, but an unreportable awareness may be *thetic* though nonconceptual. Sartre’s conflation is clear from his equation of ‘non-thetic’ with ‘non-cognitive’ (B&N: xxix), since cognition is a function of the inferential relations between beliefs. Because Sartre has mistakenly conflated *thetic* awareness with *reportable* awareness, then, he has not shown that *nonthetic* awareness can infect the *thetic* character of consciousness. He has shown only that *unreportable* elements of awareness may do this, but these elements may be *thetic* (representational) nonetheless.

Sartre’s blindness to the possibility of nonconceptual representation is to some extent the result of his Kantian heritage. When Sartre writes, for example, that in perception ‘the understanding determines pure being, isolates and fixes it in its very determinations’ (B&N: 14), he is automatically taking ‘determinations’ to be concepts (inferentially relevant constituents of beliefs) since these are the stock-in-trade of the understanding.<sup>18</sup> But to some

extent Sartre's mistake is common to theorists prior to the recent inventions of exclusion tasks and nonconceptual content. Merleau-Ponty's theory of intentionality is partly based on the same mistake. Discussing a pathological patient's difficulty in tracing a circle in the air on command, he writes:

'he can never convert the thought of a movement into actual movement. What he lacks is neither motility nor thought, and we are brought to the recognition of something between movement as a third person process and thought as a representation of movement ... a "motor intentionality" in the absence of which the order remains a dead letter' (1962, 110)

Merleau-Ponty's equation of thought with representation grounds his claim that 'motor intentionality' cannot be a form of representation. The patient's predicament could, however, be described as the conceptual representation of the action involved in understanding the command failing to trigger the combination of nonconceptual representations of the action involved in performing that action. Until recently, theorists equated representation with conceptual representation; thereby blinding themselves to the possibility of nonconceptual representation. It was this blindness that led Sartre to equate nonthetic awareness with non-cognitive awareness.<sup>19</sup>

Of the two roles that Sartre claimed to be played by nonthetic awareness of the ground of experience, then, it is not clear that nonthetic awareness could play one, and not clear that it does play the other. Deliberately turning attention towards an object seems to require at least some thetic awareness of that object, and simple experiments show that we have some, albeit imprecise, representational awareness of any part of the ground of experience that we have any awareness of. Sartre's evidence for his claim that the thetic content of awareness is affected by nonthetic awareness overlooks the possibility that it is unreportable thetic awareness that plays this role. Sartre has failed, therefore, to provide good reason to believe that we have nonthetic

awareness of the ground of visual experience. It seems that figure and ground are not distinguished by our having thetic awareness only of the figure, but rather by the thetic awareness of the figure being significantly more detailed than any awareness of the ground.

### **1.5 Nonthetic Awareness and Figure**

In addition to our thetic awareness of the figure of experience, Sartre claims, we have nonthetic awareness of it. We have nonthetic awareness not only of the ground of experience, that is, but also of qualities of the figure. This nonthetic awareness has two interrelated roles: it is the basis of our acquisition of the determinations that are drawn on in perception and in understanding; and it 'motivates' the employment of determinations in experience. Sartre is to some extent an empiricist: he thinks that determinations are neither innate nor all *a priori* but are acquired on the basis of experience or traceable back to ones that are, and he thinks that the determinations of experience track (are 'motivated' by) the qualities of experience. This empiricist theory of the origin of determinations is not accompanied, as it is in classical empiricism, by a theory of the justification of beliefs in terms of experiential evidence, partly because Sartre is not concerned with the justification of beliefs. Neither is he concerned to argue against the views of determinations that oppose his own. He simply presents a picture of the acquisition and motivation of determinations in terms of the qualities of experiences. In this section, I discuss each of these purported roles of nonthetic awareness in the light of Wittgensteinian attacks on the notion that an individual can form concepts on the basis of experience.

Sartre claims that determinations are formulated by abstraction from the multiple aspects of the figure of experience. The determination of something as a figure, he claims, 'is the origin of all determinations' (B&N: 183). A figure, or *this*, may be an object such as a chair or table, or it may be a manifest

quality of an object such as its colour or texture: the figure picked out is always relative to the concern of the subject (B&N: 322). Positing a quality differs from positing an object, though, in that when a quality is posited ‘instead of the figure’s appearing on an undifferentiated ground, it is wholly penetrated by the ground; it holds the ground within it as its own undifferentiated density’ (B&N: 188). That is, if the object is green and rough, my focusing on its greenness as a *this* does not make the roughness fade into the background, but makes the roughness an ‘inner ground’ which provides ‘the plenitude of being for the green’ (B&N: 188). This focusing does not provide a pure sensation of green, then, but makes the green of the rough object stand out as distinct from the roughness: ‘There is no abstraction here in the sense that abstraction separates what is united, for being always appears entire in its profile’ (B&N: 188). Picking out the green in this way involves a ‘polyvalent negation’ (B&N: 193): to pick out the green is to pick out that which is not the roughness, the shape, another colour of another part of the entity, any other quality of the entity, or any surrounding quality. Given that it is a ‘polyvalent negation’, a determination specifies neither an extension nor an intension that determines an extension, but a set of negative necessary conditions for a quality to be the quality focused on — the conditions that it is not any of the other qualities of the object, nor any surrounding quality.

But this is not the end of the story: a single event of focusing does not fix the set of necessary conditions of the quality once and for all. Determinations are refined by application. Nonthetic awareness of a quality that meets the conditions of an established determination ‘motivates’ the deployment of that determination. This ‘motivation is not causation’ (B&N: 27), but is the active response of consciousness to a recognised quality. The fact that we are not always conscious of focusing and applying determinations that fit the qualities of the *this* does not show that consciousness does not perform this act, he claims, but shows only that when the determinations are commonplace and the perceiver sufficiently experienced the focusing and categorisation occur so rapidly as not to be noticed (PI: 44). When a quality is recognised and a

determination applied, the other qualities that form its background and ‘inner ground’ may well be different from those that surrounded previous confrontations with the same quality. If so, they will be added to the list of negative necessary conditions, and the determination will be refined. If two phenomenally discriminable qualities are apprehended together that both meet the specification of a certain determination, then the determination will split into two: each quality will be categorised with a new determination whose list of negative necessary conditions comprises the original list plus the fact that the quality to which it applies is not the other quality to which the original determination applied.

It is because of this refinement of determinations through their application that they have no precise meanings, but always ‘meaning-to-come’ (B&N: 193). The ‘precision of the present negation’, that is, ‘is in the future’ (B&N: 193). If I am congenitally blind but with the help of technology am made to see, for example, and the first thing I see is a green apple in a blue bowl, then I may focus on the green of the apple as opposed to its shape, texture and background and thereby acquire a determination whose content is just the negation of the apple’s shape, texture, and background. If I later see another green object against a different background and apply my newly acquired determination, the determination will be modified by further negations. And so on ad infinitum. As Sartre puts it, ‘the green *never is* green’ (B&N: 193): the determination ascribed to the present quality is never identical with the precise definition of the word ‘green’, since a word has a definition which specifies the objects to which it applies whereas a determination is constructed purely of a contingent set of past experiences. Since ‘every determination is a negation’, that is, ‘the understanding in this sense is limited to denying that its object is *other* than it is’ (B&N: 14). The precise meaning of a word, therefore, ‘exists for the grammarian, the logician, the sociologist. But the psychologist need not concern himself with it because he will never find an equivalent, either in consciousness, or in some parlous unconscious invented to meet the situation’ (IPC: 72). This account of words is patchy in

Sartre's writings and tangential to the concerns of this thesis, so I will not discuss it further here. His discussion of determinations, moreover, lacks a precise account of their development, and I will not attempt to provide one for him but leave the exposition with this sketch.

Sartre's position, then, is that determinations have their meanings developed by repeated 'polyvalent negation', and that this requires the ability to focus on and isolate qualitative aspects of perceived objects either for the purpose of forming skeletal determinations or motivating the application of representations already formed which may in turn involve fleshing them out. This, claims Sartre, requires nonthetic awareness of seen objects. It might be argued that since Sartre conflates determinations with concepts, the role Sartre ascribes to nonthetic awareness in the formation of determinations could just as easily be played by nonconceptual representations. But Sartre certainly wants to claim that all *representations* originate in experience, that representation is a matter of classification by polyvalent negation, and so determinations must be formed on the basis of nonrepresentational qualia. For if the experience of qualities is construed as a matter of nonconceptual representational content, then the whole of my experience of the world could be accounted for in terms of representational content, and there would be no room left in the account for the notion of intentionality as intuition of reality, as the presence of part of reality 'in person' to consciousness, as a basic relation independent of representation. There would be no room left, that is, for Sartre's notion of intentionality (see 1.1).

The role Sartre ascribes to nonthetic awareness of qualities of the figure, or intentional object, of perception, then, commits him to a form of the empiricist claim that meanings are formulated on the basis of experience. The chief attacks on this empiricist claim in current anglophone philosophy are based on Wittgenstein's 'private language argument'. Wittgenstein asks us to imagine him keeping a diary in which he writes 'S' every time he has a certain sensation, and claims that since the sensation is private there is no 'criterion

of correctness' governing its use, so the term 'S' has no meaning (1953, § 258). It is a matter of much exegetical controversy precisely what Wittgenstein meant by this, but the basic idea is that the kinds of constraints required for stability of use and hence meaningfulness are public. On the traditional interpretation, this is the claim that the use of a word must be governed by a rule, which requires a difference between following the rule correctly and failing to do so, but there cannot be such a difference in the case of a word purporting to name a private object. There is also much controversy over *why* there could not be such a difference in the case of private objects, but all that matters for present purposes is that Sartre's 'qualities' of experience are not private objects in the requisite sense. Wittgenstein's target is the notion of sensations or sense data, objects that are ontologically dependent on my awareness of them. A past token sensation cannot, by definition, be recalled and presented again, and neither can it be shown to someone else. Sartre explicitly denies that qualities of visual experience are such private objects:

‘sight does not produce visual *sensations* ... the senses must in no way be identified with subjectivity. In fact all variations which can be registered in a perceptive field are *objective* variations’  
(B&N: 319; see also 186).

The quality of yellow that I see when I see a lemon, then, is a quality of part of the world and can be seen by others. And when I see another item that I consider to display the same quality, I can in principle go and get the lemon for comparison. The criteria for reapplying determinations are entirely public. (The temptation to suppose that colour qualia must, if they exist, be private and subjective is not of course unmotivated, but we will see in 4.5 how Sartre resists this motivation, allowing colour to be public in that anyone capable of reproducing the conditions in which I see a certain shade can see that shade.)

The denial that qualities are private does not evade all versions of the private language argument, however: Kripke's version does not rest on the claim that

rules cannot be applied to private objects but on the claim that a rule cannot be privately formulated on the basis of experience. A rule governing the application of a concept (or determination) must specify whether the concept (determination) is correctly applied in any given situation, argues Kripke, but if the rule is constituted by a finite set of past experiences it cannot specify whether the concept is correctly applied in some novel circumstance. So long as there is some novel aspect of an occasion in which the concept is applied, the rule cannot specify whether or not that novel aspect invalidates the application of the concept. Kripke gives the example of addition where I have never added together numbers larger than 56. Intending to add 57 and 68, I get the result 125; but if the rule is based solely on my past experience, then this answer could as easily be wrong as right. For there is no fact of the matter whether the rule is 'add the two numbers together' or 'add the two numbers together unless they are above 56, in which case the answer is 5' (1982, 8-9). Sartre's position is immune to this form of the private language argument, however, on the grounds that Sartre does not define determinations in terms of sufficient conditions for application, but in terms of negative necessary conditions, and so does not agree that there must be a rule specifying the precise extension of a determination and hence the correctness or incorrectness of its application in any given circumstance. A determination formed by picking out a quality of an experienced scene is thereby defined as being the quality of not being any of the other experienced qualities of the scene. It can subsequently be applied to any quality that is not any of those of the original experienced scene, but each new application will add further negative necessary conditions to the definition of the determination. Any given quality will or will not match the list of negative necessary conditions for application of a given determination, and so there will always be a fact of the matter whether or not that determination applies. When two or more distinct manifest qualities fit the definition of the determination, as mentioned above, the determination will split into two or more new, refined determinations. If this model were to be applied to the concept of addition, even though Sartre applies it only to determinations

applied in experience of the world, then in Kripke's example there would be no fact of the matter which of the two rules applied, and so the original vague concept of addition would split into two new concepts. Application of determinations, for Sartre, is not so much a matter of following rules as formulating them.

But Sartre is not out of the Wittgensteinian woods yet: McDowell uses a variant of the private language argument to attack the idea that a nonconceptual 'given' can provide the sort of motivation for applying concepts (or, by extension, determinations) that Sartre requires. McDowell is concerned with the justification of empirical beliefs and points out that since concepts are the inferentially relevant constituents of mental states or events that stand in inferential relations, it is impossible for a judgement to be inferentially derived from a nonconceptual event or state. In McDowell's terminology, 'the space of reasons' cannot extend beyond 'the space of concepts' (1989; 1994, ch. 1). McDowell's point does not rule out Sartre's theory, however, but merely points up the need to resist the temptation to construe Sartre's position as claiming that the way an object looks is a rational ground for an inference about the way it is. Sartre's position is rather the claim that the qualities of experience are individually classified on the basis of recognition — on the basis, that is, of the way they are; no inference is involved. The application of a determination is, for Sartre, simply a matter of classifying a distinguishable quality as the same as some quality previously distinguished, and perhaps thereby refining the determination; there is simply no room for inference here.

Sartre has, therefore, provided a role for nonthetic awareness of qualities of the figure of experience in the acquisition of all determinations, or representations, and in the motivation for employing particular determinations in experience of the world. Sartre's position does not fall foul of the private language argument for two reasons. First, Sartre denies that qualities are private in the requisite sense. The traditional interpretation of the private language argument threatens any claim that determinations are formed on the

basis of subjective objects of awareness, such as sense data, which are unique to particular experiences had by particular subjects, but qualia as Sartre understands them are not private in this sense. Second, Sartre's claim that determinations do not have precise fixed extensions, are not definable in terms of sufficient conditions for application, means that his position is immune to Kripke's form of the attack. If Searle is right to claim that linguistic philosophers tend to confuse features of reports with features of things reported (see 1.1), the fact that Sartre ignores or is ignorant of the 'linguistic turn' seems to have stood him in good stead here: not understanding thought in terms of the sentences used to express it means that the temptation to conflate determinations with words, which seem to have fixed extensions recorded in dictionaries, is less likely to arise. And the fact that Sartre does not hold that a claim that a certain entity is a certain way can be justified by the way it seems means that his position is not vulnerable to McDowell's attack on nonconceptual content.

Of course, Sartre has only described this role of nonthetic awareness and has not argued for this theory of the relation between thought and world. But he has sketched out a coherent position that should be of interest to philosophers concerned with the relation of thought and object. Perhaps arguments of the sort could be provided for him. Tying the meaning of determinations to the thinker's experience of parts of the world does seem, for example, to provide the object-dependence of thought that McDowell claims is required as an antidote to scepticism (1986; 1994). But these further speculations take us way beyond the concerns of *Being and Nothingness* and indeed of the present thesis.

## 1.6 Conclusions

Intentionality, for Sartre, then, is not representational, as it is for current anglophone philosophers, but relational: it involves a relation of intuition or

knowledge (*connaissance*) of a part of mind-independent reality, to which attention is paid in perceptual experience, but which is surpassed towards a different object in imaginative experience. The object attended to, or posited, the object made available for demonstrative reference, is the intentional object. Intuiting an object involves awareness of manifest qualities of that object, which motivate the application of determinations, themselves built up through awareness of qualities of objects, which means that the object is experienced as falling under certain categories. It is this rich experience, involving both qualities and determinations, that structures the world of coloured and shaped entities with instrumental and other values out of mere being in-itself. The intentional structure of perceptual experience, then, is the reason why 'a world appears instead of isolated examples of In-itself. And in this world it is possible to effect a designation and to say *this* object, *that* object' (B&N: 139). In imaginative experience, on the other hand, the manifest qualities of the object of intuition motivate determinations that are not applied to the object of intuition but which specify a different intentional object. The colours and shapes that make up the photograph of Peter, for example, can motivate determinations that specify Peter as an object of attention, rather than simply tracking the features of the photograph. Sartre's arguments for the claim that consciousness is a relation to an object, a relation of intuition or apprehension, are the subject of chapter 2. In chapter 3, we will see how Sartre's distinction between the way in which determinations are motivated in perception and in imagination allows him to evade the objection that an experience cannot be a relation to an intuited object on the grounds that the same experience could occur as an hallucination in the absence of any suitable object. The ontology underpinning Sartre's relational conception of intentionality is the subject of chapter 4. The conception of intentionality as a relation to an object whose manifest qualities motivate determinations to be applied to the object or which specify another object, detailed in this chapter, is the central concern of this thesis, and one which, I claim, grounds the whole of Sartre's early philosophy.

Sartre's claim that phenomenal consciousness of the world involves a relation to mind-independent stuff through which qualities are manifested to consciousness as well as determinations that classify the object seen on the basis of its manifest qualities was presented with a challenge in this chapter: to specify a role for qualities to play that could not be played by representations. If qualities are an inessential part of the theory, then so is the relational conception of intentionality: if all aspects of my experience of the world can be accounted for in terms of representations of the world, then Sartre's claim that phenomenal consciousness consists in relations to mind-independent entities rather than representations of possible scenarios is unfounded. Sartre's position met this challenge, I claimed (1.5), in his claim that determinations, the representations employed in consciousness to classify the object of awareness, are formed on the basis of awareness of qualities. Representations, obviously, could not play the role of grounding representations. We have also seen that determinations, for Sartre as for Spinoza (1995, letter 50; see B&N: 185), have their meaning specified by what Sartre calls 'polyvalent negation'. The meaning of a determination, that is, is fixed by a set of things that it does *not* apply to, and this understanding of determinations means that Sartre's claim that determinations are formed on the basis of experience is immune to objections based on Wittgenstein's private language argument (1.5).

Sartre's theory of the role of determinations in experience may make useful contributions to recent debate over the epistemic role of perception. Eilan, for example, argues that 'for perceptions to serve as a basis for knowledge it must be possible for the subject to use her perceptions to answer questions about the environment and to incorporate the deliverances of her perceptions into further rational deliberation and action' (1998, 189). If the answers to perceptual questions are to play the rational roles that Eilan mentions, then they must be conceptually structured. But the operation of conceptual capacities must be constrained in perception in a way that it is not constrained in pure thought if perception is to answer questions about the environment,

and this constraint requires the conceptual deliverances of perception to be based in some way on a nonconceptual component present in perceptual experience but not present in pure thought (1998, 199). This proposal faces the Wittgensteinian challenges discussed in 1.5. McDowell's point that rational relations can hold only between conceptually structured relata precludes understanding the conceptual deliverances of perception as justified by, or inferred from, the nonconceptual component of experience. But Sartre's emphasis on the classification of experience instead of inference from it sidesteps this objection. Similarly, if the concepts employed in the deliverances of perception are themselves to be understood as drawn from perception, then Kripke's objection that a rule must have infinite content where experience is finite can be sidestepped only by the Sartrean manoeuvre of construing the determinations employed in experience not as fully defined concepts but as refinable sets of negative necessary conditions for class membership, and so denying that their application involves following a rule.

Sartre also holds that purely qualitative awareness is required to explain how events in a person's environment may affect the way that person is aware of other things without that person being able to report that those events had this affect. As we have seen, Sartre's claim that a linguistically inarticulable awareness must be one free of representations conflates the notion of *representation* with that of *conceptual representation*. Only conceptual representations must by definition be inferentially and rationally linked to one another, so it remains possible for a representation of an object to be unreportable if it is not conceptual, which is to say that it does not stand in inferential relations to beliefs such as the belief that the object is represented (1.4). And Sartre also holds that purely qualitative awareness of objects is required to explain how one can deliberately turn attention to those objects, but as we have seen this role could equally be played by vague representational awareness that becomes more explicit as attention is

focused, and simple experiments suggest that we do indeed have vague representational awareness of objects that we are not attending to (1.4).

The relation between qualities and determinations in perceptual experience has implications for the issues of whether Sartre is to be understood as a structural realist or idealist, and whether he is understood as a semantic realist or idealist. The structural question, we saw in 1.2, is not clearly settled by the positionality of perceptual experience. It is unclear from this aspect of Sartre's theory alone, that is, whether Sartre takes being in-itself to be already structured as a set of mutually independent chunks, as McCulloch claims, or whether he takes being in-itself to be an unstructured mass whose apparent structure is a function of the ways in which we are aware of it, as Danto and Baldwin claim. But one thing is clear: since the *world* is formed from being in-itself by the intentionality of consciousness, the world is certainly made up of various distinguishable objects, such as chairs and tables, and these objects display the qualities that they seem to display. Qualities, though, bring in a new motivation for ascribing structure to being in-itself as well as to the world: if different regions of being in-itself manifest different qualities to consciousness, it seems that this must be due to structural differences between these objects. A full account of Sartre's understanding of qualities, though, requires an assessment of Sartre's theory in the light of the traditional philosophical claim that such qualities as colours cannot be construed as parts of mind-independent reality and so experience must be understood as representation of that reality rather than relation to it. This issue is discussed in chapter 4 (4.1 and 4.5). Sartre's understanding of determinations as built up from experience of manifest qualities similarly has ramifications for positioning Sartre in relation to various realisms and idealisms. The structure of the world, constructed from the interplay of consciousness and being in-itself, is two-fold: determinations help to structure it, on the basis of its manifest qualities. So it seems that Sartre must subscribe to one form of semantic realism: the *world* must really have the structure that the determinations employed in experience and thought ascribe to it, since that very ascription helps to structure the

world in the first place, and since the determinations are formed and motivated by the manifest qualities of the world. But this, of course, is not to say that determinations must or can capture the structure (if there is one) of *being in-itself*. Sartre's claim that determinations have their meaning fixed by 'polyvalent negation' may have ramifications for the issue of whether determinations can track the structure (if there is one) of being in-itself, for if negativity is essential to the meaning of a determination and negativity can enter into the world only by the activity of consciousness, then determinations cannot correspond to structures of mind-independent being. But this issue cannot be settled without first settling the question of whether being in-itself has any structure at all for Sartre, and this question cannot be answered without the consideration of Sartrean ontology that is central to chapter 4.

## Chapter 2

# Apprehension: The Ontological Proofs

Sartrean intentionality, as we saw in 1.1, involves apprehension of a part of mind-independent reality. The intentionality of perception is the positing of, the directing of attention toward, the mind-independent object intuited and known (*connue*), whereas the intentionality of imaginative consciousness involves surpassing the object intuited towards some other intentional object. In both cases, though, intentionality involves the presence ‘in person’ of some part of reality (B&N: 172, 318). Because experience is intentional, for Sartre, it is not an event independent of the part of the world apprehended, but consists in a direct relation to that part of the world. Perceptual experience, for example, ‘must release to us immediately the spatial-temporal object ... it releases to me the object *as it is*, not as an empty image of some reality beyond reach’ (B&N: 347). Consciousness is not self-contained with respect to the rest of reality, because as intentional it is a ‘transcendence’ (B&N: xxxvii), a movement beyond itself toward reality. More picturesquely, consciousness is a ‘wrenching away from itself (*arrachement à soi*)’ (B&N: 301, 333; see also B&N: 25, 343). The intentionality of perceptual experience grounds its positional nature: the subject can posit the seen object as a ‘this’, can demonstratively identify the intuited object, purely on the basis of the

experience because the experience is tied to the object in such a way that it could not have occurred in the absence of the object (see 1.1).

To put this another way, Sartrean intentionality is acquaintance with part of reality in Russell's sense of 'acquaintance'. Russellian acquaintance is an experience of an entity that could not occur without the existence and presence of that entity. This is to be contrasted with 'acquaintance' as McGinn (1997, ch. 4) uses the term: for McGinn, to be acquainted with an entity is to have an experience that represents and is caused by that entity. An experience of the same character can, in principle, occur in the absence of the entity, perhaps in a dream, although if it did would not be a case of acquaintance any more than it would be a case of perception. Russell, on the other hand, explicitly draws a contrast between acquaintance with an entity and knowledge of an entity under a description such as 'the entity this experience represents' or 'the entity causing this experience' (1912, 26). Acquaintance, for Russell, is not mediated by an experience that might occur in the absence of the object of acquaintance, and it is in this sense that Sartre's theory of intentionality is a theory of acquaintance. Sartre, however, does not talk of acquaintance; but uses the term '*saisir*', to grasp or apprehend (e.g. B&N: xxxviii, 140). 'Apprehension' better expresses Russellian acquaintance than does 'acquaintance', since in the ordinary meaning of these terms I can be said to be apprehending an object only while it is present, but having perceived it I am for ever acquainted with it. I therefore follow Barnes in using 'apprehension' as a translation of Sartre's '*saisie*'.

The reality apprehended in phenomenal consciousness, for Sartre, is not dependent on that apprehension, or indeed on anything else, for its existence. It is being in-itself (*être en-soi*). Sartre is, in a sense, a traditional naïve realist, in so far as he considers phenomenal consciousness of the environment to consist in apprehension of mind-independent reality. But naïve realism is not always taken simply as a claim about the ontological status of the object of

apprehension as mind-independent, but also as a claim about the structure of the object of apprehension. Naïve realism, that is, is often taken as the claim that 'the actual objects of perception, the external things such as trees, tables and rainbows, which one can perceive, *and the properties which they can manifest to one when perceived*, partly constitute one's conscious experience' (Martin 1997, 83; my emphasis). Such a form of naïve realism can ground an empiricist theory of the justification of beliefs about reality, according to which the belief that there is a red ball in front of me can be justified by the phenomenal manifestation of the fact that there is a red ball in front of me (McDowell 1982, 474). But it is not clear to what extent Sartre would assent to this. Sartre's central concern is not epistemology but ontology, not knowledge but being. The extent to which Sartre considers the 'determinations' of experience and thought track the structure of being in-itself (if it has a structure) is a central issue of this thesis. As we have seen (1.3), Sartre claims that some determinations track and are motivated by manifest qualities of the world, although others are rooted in the aims and projects of the subject, but the relation between these manifest qualities and being in-itself is far from clear in *Being and Nothingness*, and will be discussed in chapter 4 (4.5). This chapter and the next are concerned only with the aspect of naïve realism that Sartre clearly assents to, that phenomenal awareness is unmediated apprehension of being in-itself.

Sartre's introduction to *Being and Nothingness*, 'The Pursuit of Being', includes an attempt to prove this view of phenomenal consciousness, which Sartre calls his 'ontological proof' (B&N: xxxvi). But this passage is one of the most meandering and confusing of Sartre's writings. Its Proustian title, 'À la Recherche de l'Être', aptly reflects its Proustian prose, which gives the impression of an author out of control, swept along in the stream of consciousness. The passage evidently discusses two central themes of the phenomenological ontology of the book as a whole – our consciousness of the reality that surrounds us, and our consciousness of that consciousness – and is evidently meant to form the basis of the book; but it is far from evident

exactly what Sartre says about these two themes in this passage, and hence far from evident what philosophical foundations he takes himself to be laying. Like Marcel in Proust's *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu (In Search of Lost Time)*, Sartre encounters and considers various views, digressing from and returning to a few basic themes, until, towards the end, he settles on his position. His reasons for his conclusion are derived from the preceding discussion even though his own position is not one of those discussed there. This discussion involves a number of distinct dialectical voices that are not clearly separated and labelled, so it is a mistake to assume that anything Sartre writes in 'The Pursuit of Being' must be Sartrean doctrine.

This chapter is concerned with clarifying and assessing this obscure passage. First I situate Sartre's conception of the intentionality of consciousness, of phenomenal awareness as apprehension of mind-independent reality, in relation to traditional and current anglophone theories of consciousness (2.1). Next I unravel 'The Pursuit of Being', claiming that its overarching aim is to argue for Sartre's conception of the intentionality of consciousness, and separate out Sartre's arguments for that conclusion (2.2). In pursuing this aim, I argue, 'The Pursuit of Being' marks a key break between *Being and Nothingness* and the more Husserlian works that preceded it, a break forced by Sartre's shift of concern from the underpinnings of psychology to more general ontology. I argue that the discussion of self-awareness in this passage is not to be taken as expounding a view, but as describing the view that Sartre had held in earlier works and that he ascribes to Husserl as part of his argument against indirect realism and phenomenism. Ultimately, I claim, he rejects the view of self-consciousness described in 'The Pursuit of Being' as incompatible with his relational view of phenomenal consciousness. So where Wider holds that the theory of self-awareness begun in 'The Pursuit of Being' and developed from there on 'is the foundational claim in *Being and Nothingness*, the one that grounds all the other major claims Sartre defends in the work' (1997, 1), I claim that the foundational claim of *Being and Nothingness* is the theory of phenomenal consciousness argued for in 'The

'Pursuit of Being', that Sartre's own theory of self-awareness is parasitic on this theory, and that the view of self-awareness presented in 'The Pursuit of Being' is not one that Sartre holds in *Being and Nothingness*.

Having unravelled and mapped out 'The Pursuit of Being', I claim that Sartre has given three reasons in favour of his view that phenomenal consciousness is acquaintance with being in-itself. The first is the claim that any other theory of phenomenal consciousness precludes knowledge of reality beyond experience. The other two, which Sartre does not distinguish, are concerned to argue positively for Sartre's view, and either can be given the label of 'ontological proof'. These three arguments are clarified and assessed in sections 2.3-2.5. Sartre's use of the term 'ontological proof' is an allusion to widely rejected arguments for the existence of God offered by Anselm and Descartes (namechecked in the passage: B&N: xxvi, xxxvi). Anselm argues that since we have the idea of God, God exists in our minds, but since the idea of God is the idea of the greatest conceivable being and a being existing in reality is greater than one existing in our minds, God must exist in reality as well as in our minds (1965, 117). Descartes bases his argument on his hierarchy of realities. A kind of thing, claims Descartes, has one of four kinds of 'reality': it does not exist, it is a property of a substance, it is a created substance that is dependent for its being on the uncreated substance, or it is the ontologically self-sufficient uncreated substance (1984, 28-30). The idea of God, he claims, is the idea of 'a substance that is infinite, eternal, immutable, independent, supremely intelligent, supremely powerful, and which created both myself and everything else (if anything else there be) that exists' (1984, 31). The existence or non-existence of a thing is not usually contained within the idea of that thing, argues Descartes, but since ontological independence and being the creator of created substances are part of the definition of God, the definition of God is the definition of whatever is at the top of the hierarchy, and that entity exists.<sup>1</sup>

Sartre, as an atheist, must hold that there is something wrong with these arguments, so in calling his own argument an 'ontological proof' he is not claiming that it follows the structure of the arguments of Anselm and Descartes too closely. Assessing Sartre's arguments will involve the question of whether they are vulnerable to the classic criticisms of those arguments for God. The first of these criticisms is that they prove too much, since their structure can be borrowed to prove that the idea of a perfect island or of an existing unicorn must correspond to such an object in reality. The second is that the arguments misuse the notion of being or existence. As Kant put it:

"Being" is obviously not a real predicate; that is, it is not a concept of something which could be added to the concept of a thing. It is merely the positing of a thing, or of certain determinations, as existing in themselves. Logically, it is the mere copula of a judgement.' (1929, A598/B626; see also Gassendi in Descartes 1984, 224; Hume 1975, 47-50; Frege 1980, §§ 45-7)

The definition of an entity is always independent of whether it exists, argues Kant, since otherwise we could not sensibly ask whether or not a certain type of thing exists: it would be a different type of thing if it existed than if it did not. Anselm and Descartes, then, are mistaken to claim that the existence of God can be inferred from the concept of God. If Sartre makes this mistake, or if his arguments are too general and 'prove' the existence of such non-existent things as unicorns, then, his arguments will be unacceptable. Before clarifying and assessing Sartre's arguments, though, I will situate Sartre's position in classical and current debate about phenomenal awareness, and then unravel the passage in which his arguments are well hidden.

## 2.1 Theories of Experience: Positioning Sartre

People in streets everywhere and on buses in Clapham, philosophers have traditionally claimed, take their perceptual experiences to be episodes of immediate apprehension of parts of reality that do not depend for their existence on those experiences of them, although they might not put it in quite this way. This conception of perceptual experience, to which Sartre subscribes, is one aspect of direct, naïve, or common-sense realism. Opponents of this view traditionally argued that perceptual experiences are episodes of apprehension of subjective objects whose existence is dependent on those experiences, objects variously labelled ideas, impressions, percepts, sensa, sensations, and sense data. There are two forms of this classical philosophical view. The historically dominant form classifies an experience as *perceptual* if and only if it stands in some specified representative and / or causal connection with a part of reality that lies beyond it and does not depend for its existence on any experience of it or thought about it. This is indirect realism: when I see a bus, my token experience consists in apprehending an object that requires for its existence only my apprehension of it, but which is related to a mind-independent bus that lies beyond it (e.g. Hume 1975, § 12; Russell 1912, ch. 1). The other form of the classical view is phenomenism, according to which the world and its furniture consist in sequences of actual and possible subjective objects of awareness. A bus, for phenomenalists, is not a mind-independent object lying beyond appearances, but a regulated sequence of subjective entities; an experience is perceptual if and only if the subjective object of apprehension is part of an ordered sequence of such entities (e.g. Berkeley 1975).

The central target of Sartre's attack in 'The Pursuit of Being' is the classical view common to indirect realism and phenomenism. In arguing against this view, Sartre takes himself to be establishing the naïve, common sense, or direct realist view that perceptual experience is apprehension of part of mind-

independent reality. But this issue is no longer that simple. The classical view fell out of philosophical favour in the middle of the twentieth century, subsequent to but not consequent on the publication of *Being and Nothingness*, and since then two distinct theories have developed which both claim to be direct, naïve, or common-sense realism. This occurred because there are two ways of framing the debate between the classical and the purportedly common-sense views. To say that a perceptual experience is apprehension of a part of mind-independent reality is to deny two classical claims. It is to deny that experiences can be adequately specified without reference to parts of mind-independent reality (see Strawson 1979, 43-7). And it is to deny that when I demonstratively identify a part of the world on the basis of my experience of it, the reference of that demonstrative is derived from another, implicit demonstrative, so that my reference to '*that bus*' is in fact a reference to 'the entity causing or represented by *this* experience' or 'the sequence of appearances of which *this* experience is a member' (see Snowdon 1992). These two denials have now come apart, and two rival theories of experience have developed in anglophone philosophy.

One is intentionalism. Having an experience, on this view, consists in being in a state that represents a way the surrounding world might be, but being in this state does not require any subjective objects of awareness. If the experience correctly represents the way the surrounding world is, and perhaps is also caused in an appropriate way by the features of the surrounding world it represents, then it is perceptual; otherwise it is hallucinatory. So although there are no subjective objects either shielding or helping to constitute the world, intentionalists agree with the classical theorists that the experience involved in a perception is in principle independent of the perceiver's immediate environment. The lack of subjective objects means that the experience can be specified only in terms of what it represents, which brings reference to the world into the specification. But since the experience involved in my perception of a bus is independent of the bus, my demonstrative identification of the bus on the basis of my experience is a derivative

demonstrative, it has a logical form such as ‘that which *this* experience represents’ or ‘that which is appropriately related to *this* experience’ (e.g. Searle 1983, ch. 2; Dancy 1985, ch. 11; McGinn 1989, 58-99; Dretske 1995, ch. 1).

The other is disjunctivism. This view alone denies that there is a single type of experience common to perception and hallucination, claiming instead that a perceptual experience of a bus is a kind of event on the basis of which direct demonstrative reference to the bus can be made, whereas an hallucinatory experience of a bus is a different kind of experience as there is no bus to be designated ‘this’. An experience is not an element in common between perception and hallucination, but rather any experience is itself *either* perceptual *or* hallucinatory. Because this theory denies that demonstrative reference made on the basis of perceptual experience is derived from an implicit demonstrative reference to the experience, claiming instead that the demonstrative is direct, it also denies that a perceptual experience can be adequately specified without reference to the seen object: my perceptual experience of a bus can be adequately specified only as an experience of a bus (see Hinton 1973, 76-82; Snowdon 1981 and 1990; McDowell 1982 and 1986; Martin 1997).

Both intentionalism and disjunctivism are forms of direct realism: intentionalism claims experiences to be direct in the weak sense that there are no subjective entities shielding reality from the subject; disjunctivism agrees and adds that experiences are direct in the strong sense that they afford direct (non-derivative) demonstrative reference to seen objects. Whether intentionalism or disjunctivism deserve to inherit the titles ‘naïve’ and ‘common-sense’, though, is not an important question here, partly because it is not clear what these titles indicate. There seem to be three ways of understanding them: as equivalent to the term ‘pre-theoretical conception’, as indicating how experience seems to the subject taking into account no factors but those derived from experiences themselves, or as an understanding of

experience embodied in our culture. But the term ‘pre-theoretical conception’ appears to be an oxymoron, equivalent in this case to ‘what we think about experience before we think about experience’, unless it is supposed to indicate an innate understanding of experience. But in this case, as in the cases of understanding it as how experience strikes the subject or as a cultural notion, the question of what the naïve or common-sense idea amounts to is a question to be settled by qualitative social research, such as conducting focus groups on buses in Clapham, rather than by pure philosophical analysis.

The view that Sartre is attempting to establish by attacking the classical view is clearly disjunctivism, not intentionalism. Intentionality is relational for Sartre, not representational. It involves apprehension of a mind-independent object and cannot occur in the absence of that object, and hence is not the same as the intentionality postulated by anglophone intentionalist theories of experience (see 1.1). And experience is ‘positional’ for Sartre, which means that a perceptual experience itself affords direct demonstrative reference to the object perceived (see 1.1 and 1.2).

There are various forms of disjunctivism in current anglophone philosophy, but these can be construed as hues of two basic disjunctivist colours. One colour holds that perceptual experiences are brain states or events whose representational content is in some way dependent on the object of perception (Hinton 1973, 76-82; McDowell 1986; Martin 1997, 87 n11). The other distinguishes perceptual from hallucinatory experience without commitment to the claim that perceptual experiences occur within the skin (Snowdon 1981 and 1990). Sartre’s disjunctivism is a hue of the second colour. He considers intentionality to be an alternative to representation (see B&N: xxvii), and does not consider the possibility of object-dependent representation. The notion of object-dependent representation grew out of the work of Frege and Russell on the meanings of names and descriptions and the relations between them (see McCulloch 1989), and it is against this

background that the notion is applied to perceptual experiences (e.g. McDowell 1986). It is quite foreign to Sartre, as it is a product of an analytic approach to philosophy resulting from a linguistic turn that Sartre never took. To say that perceptual experience is intentional, for Sartre, is to say that it literally (spatiotemporally) includes the object as a part, and so does not occur within the skin.

The details of Sartrean disjunctivism are the subject of chapter 3. I argue there that Sartre evades all forms of the argument from hallucination, which concludes that perceptual experience cannot ground direct demonstrative reference to the seen object on the grounds that the same experience could occur as an hallucination, where the form of disjunctivism that holds perceptual experiences to be generated within the skin cannot evade all forms of this argument (3.3). For the purposes of this chapter, though, all that matters is that Sartre's position is a form of disjunctivism, and hence opposed to indirect realism, phenomenism, and intentionalism. The concern of this chapter, that is, is whether Sartre succeeds in establishing the disjunctivist claim that perceptual experience requires the existence of its object, that in perceptual experience 'consciousness is born *supported by* a being which is not itself' (B&N: xxxvii).

Sartre attempts to establish this conclusion by arguing against the view common to indirect realism, which he labels simply 'realism', and phenomenism or ontological idealism, which he often calls simply 'idealism'. These theories have in common the view that perceptual experience consists in apprehension of objects that are dependent for their existence on that apprehension. This view is the target of Sartre's attack. If Sartre's arguments are to establish his conclusion, however, they must also rule out intentionalism, which does not postulate subjective objects of apprehension but which denies that perceptual experiences themselves ground direct demonstrative reference to seen objects. But the question of whether Sartre has succeeded in establishing his position cannot be answered without first

extricating the arguments he uses from the tangled passage they are bound up in.

## **2.2 In Pursuit of ‘The Pursuit of Being’**

‘The Pursuit of Being’ is an ever-digressing series of fits and starts that does not contain a single quotation, book title, reference, or any other part of the scholarly apparatus that philosophers usually employ and that Sartre employs elsewhere. This anarchic style not only confuses readers: it also seems to have confused Sartre at a crucial stage, obscuring for him the distinction between the claim that appearances are mind-dependent events or entities and the claim that reality consists in such events or entities. The first is common to indirect realism and phenomenism, and is the central target of the passage, whereas the second is peculiar to phenomenism. In this section, I aim to lay bare the structure of this passage in order to expose the arguments embedded in it. This project is not so much one of unweaving a rainbow as filtering a glaring beam of white light into its constituent spectrum of colours. Before this filtering, though, it is crucial to delineate sharply Sartre’s target.

Sartre is attempting to show both indirect realism and phenomenism to be untenable, as a recommendation of his form of direct realism. McCulloch (1994, 84-8) presents Sartre’s aim as steering a course between Descartes and Berkeley. But this is misleading. Descartes is not the representative of indirect realism that McCulloch makes him out to be. Phenomenal consciousness does not, for Descartes, involve awareness of a subjective mental entity that purports to represent extra-mental reality: it involves instead awareness of a brain state that purports to represent extra-cranial reality (1985, 209). Although, as McCulloch points out, Descartes does believe that in principle a mind can exist without a world or a body, Descartes also believes that a mind that did exist in this way would be severely restricted in

its activities. Perception, imagination, and emotion all require 'the close and intimate union of our mind with the body' (1985, 209): a mind without a body is restricted to pure thought. And Sartre's concern is not pure thought but phenomenal consciousness of the world, precisely the kinds of mental event that Descartes considered to require the 'close and intimate union of our mind with the body'.

Sartre's own examples of an indirect realist and a phenomenalist are Kant and Husserl respectively. Both of these thinkers subscribe to transcendental idealism, the belief that the application of concepts in experience shapes the world we experience, and our knowledge of the world is possible only because of this conceptual structure of experience. In classifying Kant as a 'realist' and Husserl as an 'idealist', Sartre is entirely ignoring this idealistic theory of knowledge common to the two thinkers. Sartre is concerned in this passage with being, not knowledge. He is not primarily concerned with the ways in which or the extent to which we know the world around us, or whether reality really has the structures it seems to have. He is, rather, concerned with whether the object of apprehension in experience of the world is a mind-dependent subjective private entity, as indirect realists and phenomenologists hold, or whether it is mind-independent objective being in-itself. The question of the ways in which or the extent to which our awareness of that object of apprehension is a distorting medium is not a question Sartre addresses in this passage. Later in *Being and Nothingness*, as we have seen (1.3), Sartre endorses the claim that consciousness is active in structuring the world of experience, claiming that the way things appear is partly due to determinations applied by consciousness on the basis of past experience and in the light of current projects. By casting Descartes and Berkeley instead of Kant and Husserl as the indirect realist and phenomenalist that Sartre attacks, McCulloch blinds himself to Sartre's adaptation of a claim common to Kant and Husserl but unknown to Descartes and Berkeley: that our way of being aware of the objects of apprehension helps to structure the world. McCulloch takes the form of direct realism that Sartre is recommending to hold that

consciousness reveals a pre-existent world without distortion, that the world is just mind-independent reality (1994, 111-7). Couching the attack in terms of Kant and Husserl rather than Descartes and Berkeley emphasises the distinction between the ontological realism and idealism that Sartre takes Kant and Husserl to differ over and the epistemological idealism on which they broadly agree.

The key difference between the two transcendental idealists, as Sartre reads them, concerns the ontological relation of experience to objective reality. Ultimately, he argues, neither Kant nor Husserl has a tenable position, because they share an untenable presumption. Kant famously draws a distinction between appearances ('phenomena') and things-in-themselves ('noumena'), claiming that the world which we experience is the phenomenal realm, but that experience is in some way grounded in mind-independent noumenal reality, reality as it is in-itself. Scholars are divided between two main readings of this distinction, which (following Gardner 1999, 289-98) we can label the 'two-object' and the 'two-conception' readings. According to the 'two-object' reading, phenomena comprise a set of immediate objects of awareness, reality in-itself being an ontologically distinct realm lying beyond and somehow regulating the series of mind-dependent appearances. On this reading, 'appearances are nothing but representations' which are 'merely in us' (Kant 1929, A250 and A129). According to the 'two-conception' reading, on the other hand, Kant is drawing a distinction between two ways in which the same ontological reality can be considered. On this reading, the 'object as appearance' is to be distinguished from itself as object *in itself* (1929, B69); whilst 'the senses represent to us something merely as it appears, this something must also in itself be a thing' (1929, A249). Kant's discussion of his distinction seems ambivalent between these two readings, and it is irrelevant to present purposes to attempt to resolve this ambivalence. What is clear is that Sartre subscribes to the 'two-object' reading of Kant: 'Kant's *Erscheinung* [appearance] ... point[s] over its shoulder to a true being which [is], for it, absolute' (B&N: xxii; see xxiv). For Sartre, Kant's claim is that we have direct

awareness only of mind-dependent appearances: reality as it exists in-itself lies beyond appearances. And it is this indirect realist claim, that mind-independent reality lies shielded behind mind-dependent objects, that Sartre objects to.<sup>2</sup>

Where Kant, in Sartre's eyes, hides mind-independent reality behind a wall of subjective objects, Husserl's brand of transcendental idealism demurs only to do away with mind-independent reality altogether. '[L]est any misunderstanding arise', wrote Husserl in *Cartesian Meditations*, 'phenomenology indeed *excludes every naïve metaphysics* that operates with absurd things in themselves, but *does not exclude metaphysics as such*. ... it by no means professes to stop short of the "supreme and ultimate" questions' (1950, §64). Sartre reads Husserl to be attempting to answer the supreme and ultimate questions while retaining the traditional notion of mind-dependent appearance by denouncing as 'absurd' the 'naïve' notion of mind-independent reality that must lie inaccessible and unknowable beyond appearances (see also Husserl 1950, §41; 1982, §§ 40, 47, 52). This move can be made only if reality is construed to be ultimately constructed out of mind-dependent appearances. Husserl seems to endorse this construal of reality even as he attempts to distance himself from Berkeley. 'If anyone reading our statements objects that they mean changing all the world into a subjective illusion and committing oneself to a "Berkeleyan idealism"', he wrote, 'we can only answer that he has not seized upon the *sense* of those statements. They take nothing away from the fully valid being of the world ... The real actuality is not "reinterpreted", to say nothing of its being denied; it is rather that a countersensical interpretation of the real actuality ... is removed' (1982, § 55). Berkeleyan idealism is not the claim that reality is an illusion, but that the conception of reality as mind-independent is incoherent. 'That the things I see with mine eyes and touch with my hands do exist, really exist, I make not the least question', wrote Berkeley. 'The only thing whose existence we deny, is that which philosophers call matter or corporeal substance. And in doing of this, there is no damage done to the rest of mankind, who, I dare say, will

never miss it. ... If any man thinks this detracts from the existence or reality of things, he is very far from understanding what hath been premised in the plainest terms I could think of' (1975, §§ 35-6). If Husserl does construe reality to be constructed out of mind-dependent appearances, if his position is as close to Berkeley's as these two quotations suggest, then Sartre is right to claim that 'Husserl deserves ... to be called a phenomenalist' (B&N: 73; see also xxvi).<sup>3</sup>

On these readings, regardless of their exegetical accuracy, Kant and Husserl both hold appearances to be mind-dependent entities. They also both hold that the application of determinations in experience shapes the way the world appears to us, but Sartre does not attack this point, as he agrees with it himself. Reserving 'world' for the world as we experience it, rather than being in-itself in itself, he writes later in *Being and Nothingness*: 'it is through human reality that there is a world' (B&N: 307). The point of agreement between Kant and Husserl that Sartre attacks is the claim that appearances are mind-dependent. Such appearances can be related to reality in only one of two ways. Either reality is mind-independent and lies beyond them, as Sartre reads Kant to hold. Or reality is constructed out of mind-dependent appearances, so that in the case of perceptual experience at least the object of apprehension is part of objective reality even though it is mind-dependent, as Sartre takes Husserl to hold. Sartre's aim is to show that neither theory is tenable, and that we must therefore deny mind-dependent appearances altogether in favour of allowing mind-independent reality to be the direct object of apprehension. The rest of this section maps out the passage in which Sartre attempts to show this.

Sartre opens the passage praising 'modern thought' for 'reducing the existent (*l'existant*) to the series of appearances (*apparitions*) which manifest it', in an attempt to 'overcome a certain number of dualisms which have embarrassed philosophy' (B&N: xxi). By divorcing the subjective world of appearance from reality as it is in itself, Sartre argues, indirect realists such as Kant have

generated dualisms that give rise to scepticism about the nature and structure of reality. The embarrassing dualisms are the dualisms of interior and exterior, being and appearance, and essence and appearance (B&N: xxi-xxii).<sup>4</sup> What is embarrassing about these dualisms is not simply that they challenge us to 'explain how these realities are related to each other and why they are each considered "reality"' (Catalano 1974, 22), but that they preclude a comprehensive and grounded account of the interior, true being, and essence of the world and its denizens. If reality itself does not appear, then it must remain 'secret', 'hidden', out of cognitive reach (B&N: xxi-xxii). If reality itself is manifest in experience, on the other hand, then there nothing is secret or hidden: the being and essence of an object or of reality in general are themselves present in experience, and so cognitively available.

The progress made by 'modern thought' is the abandonment of the root of these dualisms. As Sartre puts it later in the passage, '[t]he first procedure of a philosophy ought to be to expel things from consciousness and to reestablish its true connection with the world' (B&N: xxvii). The 'modern' philosophers Sartre has in mind are Husserl and Heidegger. Perception, for Husserl, is direct awareness of reality itself, not of a mental representation of reality. We have 'evidence' (*Evidenz*) of reality, reality appears 'in person', even though knowledge of the existence and nature of reality requires phenomenological reflection on this evidence (see 1950, §§ 4-7). Heidegger claims that the central problems of philosophy arise from divorcing mind or self from reality at the outset, from 'an ontologically inadequate way of starting with something of such a character that independently of it and "outside" of it a "world" is to be proved' (Heidegger 1962, § 43a). Experience is not independent of reality, for Heidegger, but requires it; mind is not separable from world, but is being-in-the-world.

Heidegger soon drops out of § I of 'The Pursuit of Being', however, as Sartre raises the question of whether abandoning indirect realism is sufficient for avoiding the embarrassing dualisms, or only necessary. 'Does this mean that

by reducing the existent to its manifestations we have succeeded in overcoming *all* dualisms? It seems rather that we have converted them all into a new dualism: that of the finite and the infinite' (B&N: xxii-xxiii). Since a thing can be viewed in infinitely many ways and repeatedly across time, there remains the problem of the relation between a single finite appearance of an object and the infinite sequence of appearances of which it is a member. One option is to claim that appearances are mind-dependent, and that reality consists in infinite sequences of actual and possible appearances. Given that Husserl claims us to apprehend reality directly, and considers the notion of mind-independent existence 'absurd', Sartre ascribes this phenomenalist conception of the relation between appearance and reality to Husserl. But the embarrassing dualisms seem to reappear within this framework: the interior, being, and essence of an object now pertain to the infinite series of appearances, and so are not contained in any one appearance. 'In thus replacing a variety of oppositions by a single dualism on which they are all based, have we gained or lost?' (B&N: xxiv).

Sartre approaches this question from an oblique angle. § II of 'The Pursuit of Being' raises a question about the notion of mind-dependent appearances common to indirect realism and phenomenism. There is, he claims, a 'legitimate problem of *the being of this appearing*' (B&N: xxiv). We do apprehend being, he claims, 'since we can speak of it and since we have a certain comprehension of it' (B&N: xxiv). This claim is based on Heidegger's hermeneutic conception of enquiry, according to which any enquiry requires prior understanding or comprehension (*Verstehen*) of the subject-matter enquired into. Without such an understanding, we would have neither the motivation nor the ability to undertake the enquiry: we could not formulate or understand the question. Enquiry consists in 'interpretation' (*Auslegung*), which makes explicit what is already implicitly understood. Ontology, or enquiry into being, therefore requires a pre-ontological comprehension of being (Heidegger 1962, §§ 2, 4, 32, 33). Sartre follows Heidegger (1962, § 1)

in claiming that we do not understand the term ‘being’ by associating it with a description or definition, and so must understand it by apprehension.

Sartre’s discussion in § II focuses on the way in which we apprehend being. There are two options: either there are particular sorts of experience, such as nausea or boredom, which exclusively reveal being, or we apprehend being in experience in general. Either, that is, there is a special ‘phenomenon of being’, a kind of appearance that reveals being, or the being we apprehend is ‘the being of the phenomenon’, the being of every appearance. Sartre rejects the claim that there is a ‘phenomenon of being’ manifest in certain experiences such as boredom or nausea: his description of that claim is not to be taken, as Catalano (1974, 29) and Wider (1997, 42) take it, as an endorsement, but as the presentation of the way ‘[i]t seems ... at first’ (B&N: xxiv).<sup>5</sup> Sartre dismisses the idea that our comprehension of being is rooted in a special type of appearance on the grounds that appearances themselves must *be*. Being, he argues, is not a quality of an object like colour or smell, and neither is it signified by appearances in the way a sign signifies its object. One apprehends objects exhibiting qualities in experience, and these objects and qualities have being, or *are*: their being itself cannot be apprehended except in apprehending them. ‘Being is simply the condition of all revelation. It is being-for-revealing (*être-pour-dévoiler*) and not revealed being (*être dévoilé*)’ (B&N: xxv).

The problem that this poses, if it is right, is how the relation between appearance and being is to be construed if appearances are to be mind-dependent. Given that being is the condition of revelation, that appearance requires being, the being that appears cannot ‘exist only insofar as it reveals itself’ but is ‘transphenomenal’ (B&N: xxvi). This conclusion is, of course, the target conclusion of the passage as a whole: that we apprehend being which does not depend for its existence on our apprehension of it. But, even granting Sartre his premises in § II, his conclusion is not warranted because

he has not ruled out the possibility that although being is necessary for appearance, appearance is also necessary for being.

Sartre is aware that he has left this option open, and begins § III by pointing it out. 'Why not say that the being of the appearing is its appearance? This is simply a way of choosing new words to clothe the old "*Esse est percipi*" of Berkeley. And it is in fact what Husserl and his followers are doing' (B&N: xxvi). It is at this point that Sartre's dialectical style causes most confusion. Although attacking the shared claim of indirect realism and phenomenism that appearances are mind-dependent, the consideration of being has led to the question of whether *being* is mind-dependent, and this includes the being of objects and of the world, and so is the claim peculiar to phenomenism. From here on, Sartre couches most of the passage as an attack on phenomenism, and by the time he comes to summarise the whole argument, he seems to have lost sight of indirect realism altogether. The focus on phenomenism, moreover, leads to an exposition of a theory of the relation between consciousness and self-consciousness widely read as being an affirmation of that theory, but which I claim to be an exposition of a view that Sartre considers a part of phenomenism. The purpose of the exposition is to provide the background for an argument against phenomenism on grounds of incoherence. The focus on phenomenism serves two rhetorical purposes as well as playing a role in the dialectic of Sartre's argument. It is an attempt to distance Sartre's phenomenology from Husserl's at the very outset. And it is an attempt to distance *Being and Nothingness* from an aspect of the view of consciousness advocated in Sartre's earliest works (IPC: 115; TE: 402). This is the view that Sartre ascribes to Husserl, that consciousness is ontologically independent of reality, requiring only its consciousness of itself in order to exist. It is partly because Sartre advocated this view in his earliest works that § III of 'The Pursuit of Being' is often read as an affirmation of that view (see e.g. McCulloch 1994, 101). But as Sartre's works developed, he became less enthusiastic about this claim: in *Sketch for a Theory of Emotions* he ascribed it to Husserl without affirming it himself, and it is notably absent

from the short discussion of self-awareness in *The Psychology of Imagination* (STE: 23, 25; PI: 13-4). ‘The Pursuit of Being’ marks the final break with this aspect of Sartre’s earliest works. Facing ontological questions for the first time, Sartre is forced to relinquish this aspect of his earlier phenomenological psychology on the grounds that, as I will show, it is in conflict with the dependence of consciousness on its objects.

The confusion of § III is worsened by Sartre claiming early on that the mind-dependence of reality can be ruled out ‘for two essential reasons, one concerning the nature of the *percipi*, the other that of the *percipere*’, and then subtitling the rest of the section “The nature of the *percipere*” (B&N: xxvi). This makes it seem as though he is addressing the second mentioned problem with phenomenology in the rest of the section, when in fact he saves both problems for § IV (confusingly named after the first mentioned problem, ‘The Being of the *Percipi*’). In fact, he spends the rest of § III discussing the ontology of consciousness required for the claim that reality is mind-dependent, since ‘an idealism intent on reducing being to the knowledge (*connaissance*) we have of it, ought first to give some kind of guarantee for the being of knowledge’ (B&N: xxvi). The rest of the section is devoted to answering this question on behalf of Berkeley and Husserl.

As a result, most of § III is not in Sartre’s own voice, as most commentators take it to be, but in the voice of a phenomenalist. It ends, for example, with the claim that ‘it is because of this identity of appearance and existence within [consciousness] that it can be considered as the absolute’ (B&N: xxxii). But an ‘absolute’ is something that is ontologically self-contained, that requires no other thing in order to exist, and Sartre holds that consciousness is a relation to mind-independent reality and hence requires that reality in order to exist (B&N: xxxvii). And Sartre does not hold, as Caws (1979, 55), Hammond, Howarth, and Keat (1991, 104), Neu (1988, 80), Whitford (1982, 30), and Wood (1988, 211) claim that he does, that consciousness is entirely transparent to the subject – that its ‘appearance and existence’ are identical.

Instead, Sartre holds that self-awareness is ‘nonpositional’ and ‘nonthetic’, and as we have seen (1.4) this means that it does not include the focusing of attention required for detailed awareness. In *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* and *The Psychology of Imagination*, as he is moving away from his earlier view that consciousness is absolute, Sartre proposes that self-awareness may be a matter of degree, and calls self-awareness ‘a diffuse light’, ‘vague’, and ‘fugitive’, which strongly suggests that he no longer considered consciousness to be transparent to itself (STE: 79; PI: 14). In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre does not call consciousness transparent, but ‘translucent’ (*translucide*). The difference between transparency and translucency is best illustrated by the difference between an ordinary window and one made of frosted glass; as *Larousse* puts it, a translucide body diffuses light so that objects ‘are not clearly visible’ (*ne sont pas visible avec netteté*) through it.<sup>6</sup> Since Sartre does not consider consciousness to be transparent, he does not believe that there can be no hidden or unacknowledged aspects of a conscious episode, and so does not accept the ‘identity of appearance and existence’ that he discusses in § III. Had Sartre believed in the transparency of consciousness, he would not have been able to deny the validity of common-sense as a guide to consciousness (see 0.3), and he would not have been able to agree with Freud’s denial that the individual is in a privileged position when it comes to understanding his or her own conscious life (see B&N: 560).

The view of consciousness that Sartre ascribes to phenomenism, then, is that consciousness is the foundation of its own being, a self-contained absolute. This is necessary, he claims, following Husserl (1982, §§ 55, 76), in order that consciousness be the ‘foundation-of-being’ (*l’être-fondement*) for appearances. For some reason, Sartre considers this ontological independence of consciousness to require intimate self-awareness. That is, he considers it obvious that if consciousness contains everything required for its existence, it must be founded on its awareness of itself. It is in the context of ascribing this view to phenomenism that Sartre writes:

'the necessary ... condition for a knowing consciousness to be knowledge of its object, is that it be consciousness of itself as being that knowledge. This is a necessary condition, for if my consciousness were not consciousness of being consciousness of the table ... it would be a consciousness ignorant of itself, an unconscious – which is absurd' (B&N: xxviii).

This paragraph is often decried as a bad argument for the claim that all states of consciousness must be states of self-consciousness (Caws 1979, 63; Danto 1991, 46; Hammond, Howarth, and Keat 1991, 105-6; McCulloch 1994, 99; Rosenberg 1981, 258; Webber 1997, 18). Taken as an argument for that claim, it is indeed useless: the claim that 'a consciousness ignorant of itself ... is absurd' would be true only if it is a necessary condition of a consciousness that it is not ignorant of itself, which is precisely the conclusion of this purported argument.<sup>7</sup> But in the context of ascribing a theory of consciousness to Berkeley and Husserl, the paragraph makes better sense: it *would* be absurd for anyone who agreed that consciousness is ontologically founded on self-consciousness to deny that self-consciousness is necessary for consciousness; this would be 'absurd' in the straightforward sense of 'contradictory'. Sartre adds that self-consciousness is also a *sufficient* condition of consciousness, 'for my being conscious of being conscious of that table suffices in fact for me to be conscious of it. That is of course not sufficient to permit me to affirm that this table exists in itself – but rather that it exists for me' (B&N: xxviii). This claim tends to be ignored, presumably because it adds nothing to the purported argument for self-awareness. What this overlooks, however, is that if Sartre is here writing in his own voice, then he has claimed that in order to be conscious of a table it is not necessary that the table exists, which directly contradicts his view that 'consciousness is born *supported* by a being which is not itself' (B&N: xxxvii). Reading the paragraph as ascribing a view to Sartre's opponents resolves the apparent contradiction.

Sartre goes on to argue that the second-order consciousness required for the existence of the first-order consciousness cannot be a separate conscious event, since if it were the second-order consciousness would require for its existence a third-order consciousness, and so on ad infinitum. McCulloch (1994, 100) suggests that this regress might not be vicious, since there is no need to claim that every consciousness is accompanied by a higher-order consciousness, but merely that we can become conscious of our own states or episodes of consciousness. But reading the passage as clarification of the phenomenalist view that consciousness is founded entirely on self-consciousness shows why the regress is vicious: every postulated consciousness would require a higher-order consciousness as a necessary condition. In order to avoid the impending regress, Sartre correctly concludes, the second-order consciousness which is necessary for the existence of the first-order consciousness must in some way *be* that first-order consciousness.

Here, Sartre inserts a couple of paragraphs in his own voice that add his own reasons for believing in the self-awareness of consciousness. Using the example of counting cigarettes, he argues that the self-awareness of consciousness is necessary for the execution of goal-directed activities and for our ability to reflect on our own consciousnesses (B&N: xxix). This second point is an application of his more general claim that deliberately turning attention towards something requires prior nonpositional or nonthetic awareness of that thing. As we saw in chapter 1 (1.4), however, it seems rather that some form of positional, thetic awareness is required to motivate a shift of attention. I will discuss the first point, that nonthetic awareness is required for a sequence of consciousness to be united in a project motivated by an overarching goal, in the conclusions to this chapter, where I will argue that his claim can be retained while the view of self-awareness put forward in § III is rejected (2.6). But the key point to notice here is that these two claims about the role of nonthetic awareness are not sufficient for the claim that every consciousness must be self-aware: perhaps there are consciousnesses that are not parts of activities and cannot be reflected on. This paragraph,

then, is logically independent of the view he is ascribing to Husserl, the view that an episode of consciousness cannot be without being self-aware.<sup>8</sup>

After this digression, Sartre returns to the plot. He concludes that his opponents are committed to the claim that consciousness contains in itself the necessary and sufficient conditions of its existence:

‘consciousness is consciousness through and through. It can be limited only by itself. ... Consciousness is a plenum of existence, and this determination of itself by itself is an essential characteristic’ (B&N: xxxi).<sup>9</sup>

He also describes it as the view that consciousness is a ‘non-substantial absolute’ (xxxii). To call consciousness ‘absolute’ is to say that it does not require the existence of anything else. Sartre’s use of the term ‘non-substantial’ here, it seems, should be taken as indicating that consciousness should not be identified with its set of properties, or its set of essential properties. He writes: ‘the ontological error of Cartesian rationalism is not to have seen that if the absolute is defined by the primacy of existence over essence, it cannot be conceived as a substance’ (B&N: xxxii). Sartre later defined being for-itself as a ‘non-substantial absolute’ (B&N: 619) and defined ‘existentialism’ as the view that for the human ‘existence precedes essence’ (1946a, 27). This may be why McCulloch (1994, 101) takes this final paragraph of § III, and with it the rest of § III, to be affirming the view that Sartre is ascribing to Husserl. But the human individual that exists ‘for-itself’ (*pour-soi*) must be distinguished from consciousness. The for-itself, the subject of psychological theorising, as we shall see in 4.2, is for Sartre a larger entity of which consciousness is a dependent part. The question of what it means to call the for-itself a non-substantial absolute will be considered at the end of the thesis (5.3). All that matters for present purposes is that consciousness is not the same as the for-itself, so predicates true of the for-itself are not thereby to be applied to consciousness. Consciousness is

'not ... the totality of human being, but ... the instantaneous nucleus of this being' (B&N: 70).

Having spelled out the view of consciousness he considers his phenomenalist opponents to be committed to, Sartre finally presses on, in § IV, with the problems raised at the beginning of § III. The first concerns the notion of 'being perceived'. This is a passive notion, something that befalls something. If it were to be identical with the being of the appearance, then the being of the appearance would itself be passive. Appearances would exist passively. Sartre's objection is that this is a category mistake: existence cannot be passive or active. The claim that any thing's *esse* is *percipi*, says Sartre, is 'nonsense' (B&N: xxxv). In his summary of this objection in § V, he couches it in terms of the being of objects, of reality at large, rather than in terms of appearances (B&N: xxxvii). But the point can be applied to either the phenomenalist claim that a world made out of mind-dependent appearances or the claim common to phenomenism and indirect realism that appearances are mind-dependent in the first place: both claims involve mind-dependent existence.

The second problem Sartre raises is based on the account of consciousness that Sartre ascribed to Berkeley and Husserl in § III. Even if appearances could exist passively, Sartre claims, they could only be passive in relation to consciousness if consciousness was capable of being passive in relation to them. If *a* can act on *b*, then *b* can act on *a*. He then claims that this is incompatible with the claim that consciousness is absolute. An absolute consciousness, he claims, is pure spontaneity, entirely self-directed, and so cannot be acted on from without (B&N: xxxv). It is not clear why Sartre considers an absolute consciousness founded on self-consciousness to be incapable of being acted on from without, as we shall see (2.5). In his first book, Sartre affirmed that consciousness is incapable of being affected from without on the grounds that it is an absolute spontaneity grounded on self-

awareness, but he did not argue for the connection between these claims there either (IPC: 115).

Sartre attempts to distil the foregoing discussion into an ‘ontological proof’ of his position in § V. He glosses his own position as a reversal of phenomenism: reality is not dependent on an ontologically independent consciousness, but consciousness is dependent on an ontologically independent reality. The purported proof of this position is:

‘All consciousness is consciousness *of* something. This definition of consciousness can be taken in two very distinct senses: either we understand by this that consciousness is constitutive of the being of its object, or it means that consciousness in its inmost nature is a relation to a transcendent being. But the first interpretation of the formula destroys itself’ (B&N: xxxvi).

Sartre’s attack on phenomenism following this paragraph oscillates between the claim that mind-dependent appearances would ‘dissolve in the subjective’ (B&N: xxxvii) and the claim that reality could not be constructed out of mind-dependent appearances even if such things could exist, since ‘this subjectivity cannot go out of itself to posit a transcendent object in such a way as to endow it with a plenitude of impressions’ (B&N: xxxvi). Disambiguating this section leads to two separate ontological proofs, following the two problems raised in § IV, one to do with the nature of the perceived, the other to do with the nature of the perceiving. On both interpretations, ‘[a]ll consciousness is consciousness *of* something’ is the claim that consciousness is apprehension of existent objects. According to one interpretation, consciousness cannot be constitutive of the being of its object because the notion of mind-dependent being involves a category mistake. According to the second, consciousness cannot be constitutive of the being of its object because the notion of mind-dependent appearance both requires and is inconsistent with the conception

of consciousness formulated in § III. Both these interpretations preserve Sartre's claim that the argument is concerned with the structure of consciousness, since on both interpretations the argument is concerned to show that, as apprehension of being, consciousness must be apprehension of being in-itself. 'We are here on the ground of being, not knowledge', Sartre writes; 'consciousness implies in its being a non-conscious and transphenomenal being' (B&N: xxxviii).

In § VI, Sartre gives a different summary of the preceding sections (echoed at B&N: 171). Indirect realism, he claims, has been ruled out on the grounds that there cannot be mind-dependent appearances. Phenomenalism has been ruled out on the same grounds, but also because it cannot coherently allow consciousness to 'act upon transcendent being' and because 'consciousness cannot get out of its subjectivity if the latter has been initially given' (B&N: xl). The claim that both indirect realism and phenomenalism are ruled out by the impossibility of mind-dependent appearances conforms to the first interpretation of the ontological proof delineated above: consciousness must be apprehension of being, and being cannot be mind-dependent; therefore, consciousness is apprehension of mind-independent being. The further claims about phenomenalism, however, suggest the second interpretation: mind-dependent appearances would require an absolute consciousness founded on self-consciousness, but since such a consciousness cannot be affected from without, the principle of inertia shows that it cannot affect other beings either, and so cannot construct reality from appearances.

The rest of § VI is devoted to a preliminary characterisation of being in-itself. He repeats his conclusion of § II that ontology is the study of 'the meaning of being' (*le sens de l'être*). Because phenomenal consciousness is apprehension of being, he claims, the 'meaning' of being is implicit in every appearance: I 'have at each instant what Heidegger calls a pre-ontological comprehension of it; that is, one which is not accompanied by a fixing in concepts and elucidation' (B&N: xxxix). This upshot of his preferred theory of

consciousness suggests the first interpretation of his ontological proof of that theory: we understand ‘being’ not by definition, by fixing in concepts and elucidation, but only because we apprehend it. Sartre’s aim in the rest of *Being and Nothingness* is to lay bare the ‘meaning’, or ‘sense’ (*sens*), of being: to explicate its structures. He begins this task in § VI, discussing aspects of its mind-independence, but emphasises that this is only preliminary. The ontology Sartre develops will be discussed in chapter 4. Sartre ends the passage with some questions. The discussion of ‘The Pursuit of Being’, he tells us, has identified two regions of being – consciousness and the in-itself – but what are the ‘meanings’ (structures) of these two regions of being, in what sense are they both ‘being’, and how can these two regions be united when each seems to be ontologically self-sufficient? This last question, however, is disingenuous. Sartre’s § III does not show consciousness to be self-sufficient. It shows at most that some types of consciousness must be self-aware and that Husserl is committed to consciousness being self-sufficient in virtue of this self-awareness. Sartre’s own ontological proof attempts to show that consciousness is *not* self-sufficient. As a result, this last problem is resolved fairly swiftly in *Being and Nothingness*: consciousness is an abstraction that cannot exist on its own; it is not an entity, but a ‘moment’ of ‘being-in-the-world’ (B&N: 3). As Sartre later puts it, ‘consciousness of being is the being of consciousness’ (B&N: 31). If pre-reflective consciousness is to be a part of consciousness, it must be a consequence of consciousness of being in-itself.

Sartre’s repeated reformulations of his proof in the closing sections of ‘The Pursuit of Being’, which are not obviously equivalent to one another, along with his conflation of objections to the notion of mind-dependent appearance with objections to the claim that reality is constructed out of such appearances, strongly suggest that he failed to separate out the strands of his thought sufficiently to recognise that he actually has two attempted proofs here. In addition to these arguments, the consideration of the sceptical problems raised by dualistic theories of the relation between appearance and

reality seem to provide a third motivation for agreeing with Sartre that consciousness is apprehension of mind-independent reality. Before going on to assess the two forms of the ontological proof, I will investigate this anti-sceptical claim.

### 2.3 Against Humean Scepticism

The kind of scepticism that Sartre finds an objectionable upshot of indirect realism is Humean, not Cartesian, scepticism. It is not, that is, the general worry that unless I can prove the reliability of belief in general, unless I can prove that I am not the dupe of a demon no less powerful than cunning and intent on deceiving me, then I cannot have any claim to knowledge. If Sartre had been aiming to overcome Cartesian scepticism by affirming a certain theory of experience, he would have failed: that theory itself could be a demon-induced false belief. It is rather the problem that if experience veils reality, then I cannot have knowledge of reality.<sup>10</sup> If this problem is to provide a motivation for embracing a Sartrean conception of experience as dependent on the mind-independent reality it is an apprehension of, as Sartre implies it does, then there are four questions that must be answered. First, exactly what is wrong with following Hume (1978, book 1 § 7) and simply embracing the scepticism? Second, if the scepticism is intolerable, why does that force an abandonment of mind-dependent appearances rather than, as Berkeley (1975, 108) suggests, an abandonment of reality beyond appearances in favour of a phenomenalist reality constructed out of mind-dependent appearances? Third, do current anglophone intentionalist theories of experience, which deny the existence of mind-dependent objects but nonetheless construe experience as independent of the reality it represents, succeed in overcoming the dualism? Fourth, does the Sartrean construal of experience as apprehension of mind-dependent reality avoid this scepticism?

Sartre's answer to the first question is that the scepticism in question is embarrassing because it precludes the provision of a conclusive ontology of reality and our place in it. This point, it seems, is right. If reality is beyond experience, then the whole of the experiences we have are compatible with any number of alternative realities, and in the limiting case there may be no mind-independent reality at all. Since any claim about the nature of reality made on the basis of experience will be based on inference, and since inference is defeasible, it is difficult to see how one could be confident about any such claim. The evidence will be compatible with an alternative construal of reality (see McDowell 1982, § II).<sup>11</sup> But this point in itself does not explain quite what is wrong with Humean scepticism. Why should the lack of a conclusive ontology be so objectionable as to motivate the rejection of a philosophical theory that leads to it? After all, so long as we can discern regularities in experience, we can predict and hence learn to control these regularities, and thereby develop all the science we need to enhance our lives. Medicine and technology have improved the human lot (in the West, at least) without a conclusive ontology of reality, so why should we be embarrassed by the lack of such an ontology?

There are three reasons why scientific success does not undermine Sartre's claim that the lack of a conclusive ontology is an embarrassment to philosophy. First, Sartre is only worried about an embarrassment *to philosophy*: he does not go as far as Kant's claim that it is 'a scandal to philosophy and to human reason in general' (1929, Bxxxix). Philosophy is that exercise of human reason that aims to provide an overall account of reality and our place in it, and so would clearly be embarrassed by an inability to do so. Moreover, a philosophical theory that provides such a theory would clearly be superior to any that does not, on the grounds that it would have a greater explanatory value, and this provides a pragmatic reason to avoid all theories that preclude conclusive ontology. Second, as Kim (1998, 59-60) points out, if a system of thought precludes our providing an account of some types of object or event — or, indeed, of reality in general — then there is clearly

something wrong with our system of thought. Overhauling it may lead to a deeper and more useful understanding of ourselves and our environment, and so lead to even greater scientific success. Third, many branches of science are — as their practitioners admit — young, in progress, and areas of much controversy. Science is far from complete, and perhaps revising our system of thought is necessary for its completion. Most artificial intelligence research, for example, is premised on the functionalist view that all mentality is manipulation of representations. If Sartre's conception of experience is correct, and consciousness is not simply a matter of hosting a representation that may or may not accurately reflect the seer's environment, then the computers built in mainstream artificial intelligence research will never be conscious. The benefits for psychology of investigating the relations between mind and reality are even more obvious. We can agree with Sartre, then, that an inability to provide a conclusive ontology is an embarrassment to philosophy, and we can add that human reason in general may gain from the advancement of philosophy.

The answer to the second question is that phenomenism must ultimately postulate some kind of reality beyond experience or it will fail to account for the fact that reality does not necessarily do what I want it to. Struggling with objects in order to bring about a desired end, Sartre claims, reveals 'the resistance of things' and the 'coefficient of adversity' in the world (B&N: 304, 324, 327). In action, I discover that the world can be manipulated only in accordance with certain laws that govern it and 'does not depend on my whim' (B&N: xxiii; see IPC: 1; STE: 62). The reality that I act on has some 'principle of being' (B&N: xxiii) that is responsible for its resistance to some of my efforts (see IPC: 1, 115; STE: 62-6; B&N: 179, 191, 197, 217).<sup>12</sup> This point is reminiscent of Johnson's attempt to refute Berkeleyan idealism by kicking a stone: if the stone does not move, then it has some nature or being that is not dependent on my whim. Johnson's point fails against Berkeley, however, because Berkeley claimed that the sequence of actual and possible appearances that makes up reality is regulated by God (1975, 85-6). The

stone does not move because God does not want it to. So ultimately Berkeley does not avoid the scepticism engendered by indirect realism, because Berkeley does not avoid postulating a reality that lies beyond and regulates experience. Berkeley's God, in fact, is just one more postulate alongside Cartesian extended substance and Lockean atoms in a void, which together with other possibilities make up the list of possible extra-experiential realities between which we cannot definitively decide precisely because they are extra-experiential. But Husserl, according to Sartre, is vulnerable to Johnson's critique, because Husserl, according to Sartre, is a phenomenalist who does not postulate any reality beyond appearance to account for their regularity and resistance to my efforts (B&N: 324).<sup>13</sup> Given this resistance, phenomenism must postulate some extra-experiential reality.

Given that both indirect realism and phenomenism generate Humean scepticism by postulating an extra-experiential reality required to account for the regularity of experience, the third question asked above remains: does anglophone intentionalism fare any better? This intentionalism is the view that experience consists in representation of reality which may or may not be accurate. The experience is independent of the reality it purports to represent on this view, since the same kind of experience may occur as either a perception or an hallucination. It is for this reason that intentionalism fares no better than indirect realism and phenomenism. The scepticism engendered by indirect realism and phenomenism is not an upshot of the fact that they postulate subjective objects of awareness, such as sense data or sensations. It is an upshot of the fact that the experience itself is independent of reality, and so is compatible with any of a list of possible realities. And this characteristic is preserved in current anglophone intentionalist theories. Although intentionalist theories all postulate a mind-independent reality that causes and is represented by perceptual experience, it remains that since the experience does not itself include this reality the nature of the reality cannot be discovered on the basis of experience. It remains possible, that is, that the reality in question is a Cartesian extended substance or a Lockean system of

atoms in a void. It even remains possible that the distinction between a perception and an hallucination is not due to some causal connection between the experience and reality being present only in the perceptual case, but is due to only perceptual experiences being parts of sequences of actual and possible experiences regulated by a Berkeleyan God. The fact that this Berkeleyan option is not currently taken by any intentionalists does not matter: it remains a possibility given the nature of experience as they construe it.

What is required to rule out this scepticism while preserving the construal of experience as representation of reality is the denial that perceptual experience is independent of reality, the denial that the same experience can occur as either a perception or an hallucination. We have seen that this denial is made by some current anglophone theorists who wish to preserve the claim that all experiences are representations generated within the skin, rather than embrace the Sartrean claim that perceptual experience is not generated within the skin but includes the object as a spatiotemporal part (2.1). But this form of disjunctivism agrees with Sartre that perceptual experience at least is direct apprehension of mind-independent reality, and the purpose of the present chapter is to ascertain whether Sartre has provided solid grounds for this claim. An argument in favour of Sartre's disjunctivism as opposed to this anglophone disjunctivism will be provided in 3.3, but for present purposes it is sufficient to categorise the two theories together.

Given that Humean scepticism results from indirect realism, phenomenism, and intentionalism, then, it remains to see whether construing experience as apprehension of mind-independent reality is sufficient to overcome this scepticism. For if it is not, the charge of scepticism can hardly be taken as a reason to reject these other theories in favour of this construal. It might be argued, following Nagel (1974), that unmediated access to reality is not sufficient for understanding all the facts that there are, on the grounds that there are subjective facts (such as those that describe what it is like to be a bat) that are available only from a viewpoint that we can neither occupy nor

imagine (such as that of a bat). But there is no need to engage with such claims in order to defend Sartre's claim that construing experience as apprehension of mind-independent reality is sufficient to overcome Humean scepticism, for two reasons. First, if it is true that there are such unestablishable facts as what it is like to be a bat, such facts are not objective ontological facts: bat-ontology is exhausted in descriptions of the objective nature and structure of bats. Second, if it is true that there are such unestablishable facts as what it is like to be a bat, then this will impose a limitation on all attempts to delineate the structure of reality, including indirect realism, phenomenism, and intentionalism. The construal of experience as apprehension of mind-independent reality would still allow a philosophical system superior to those premised on other conceptions of experience if it allows a delineation of the objective ontological facts when those other systems do not.

A more important challenge to Sartre's anti-sceptical claim is that it might not go far enough. Overcoming Humean scepticism might require not only the claim that experience is apprehension of mind-independent reality, but the additional claim that experience is apprehension of the mind-independent structures of reality. This seems to be McDowell's claim when he recommends construing perceptual experience as apprehension of mind-independent facts, such as the fact that it is raining, as required to avoid Humean scepticism (1982). We have not yet decided the issues of whether Sartre considers reality to have a mind-independent structure, as opposed to mind-independent existence, and if so whether he considers it possible to capture that structure in thought and language. But it might seem nonetheless that his emphasis on the role of consciousness in constructing the world of ordinary experience will preclude him from understanding experience as the manifestation of mind-independent facts. But even if experience is not the manifestation of mind-independent facts, but only a manifestation of mind-independent being, this would not preclude the formulation of a definitive

ontology on the basis of experience. The nature of reality could be derived from the nature of experience by a combination of two approaches.

Because all perceptual experience, for Sartre, reveals mind-independent reality even though it distorts it, one approach would be to compare the experiences of a single subject over time and of different subjects in order to identify the features common to those experiences. The determinations applied by consciousness in experience are partly a result of experience and of the aims and projects of the perceiver, for Sartre, and so are not all universal among subjects. Sartre comes close to making this claim when he writes of objectivity as 'the result of experimental measures and of the agreement of minds with each other' (B&N: 311). The only difficulty with this move would be if there were some necessary distortion common to all minds. But even so, this problem could be removed by the second way of identifying the nature of reality on the basis of distorting experiences: so long as the structures of experience can be identified, the ways in which it distorts the appearance of mind-independent reality can be identified, and hence the nature of reality can be identified by subtracting these distorting influences from the way reality seems. Sartre certainly does hold that the structures of experience can be identified: that is the aim of phenomenology. The extent to which they distort the appearance of reality could in principle be assessed by attempting to identify the structures of reality required for consciousness to have the structures it has.

I return to this point in the conclusions to the thesis (5.2), where I argue for a certain ontology to be ascribed to Sartre. All that matters for current purposes, however, is that McDowell's claim that Humean scepticism can be overcome only by understanding experience as the manifestation of mind-independent facts is too strong. So long as experience is manifestation of mind-independent reality, so that nothing is in principle hidden from consciousness, Humean scepticism need not be engendered by allowing consciousness to be a distorting lens, so long as the ways in which it distorts can be ascertained.

Given that Sartre is right to claim that Humean scepticism can be avoided only by construing experience as apprehension of mind-independent reality, and given that the avoidance of Humean scepticism does, as Sartre points out, aid philosophy in its enterprise and may perhaps aid the advancement of human understanding in general, we can conclude that the avoidance of Humean scepticism does indeed provide a powerful motivation for embracing that conception of experience. The next two sections of this chapter are concerned with whether Sartre has also *proven* that we should embrace that conception of experience.

## 2.4 Ontological Proof 1: The Meaning of ‘Being’

One way to read Sartre’s statement of his ‘ontological proof’ is to draw on the discussions of the notion of ‘being’ in sections II and IV of ‘The Pursuit of Being’ (see 2.2). ‘All consciousness is consciousness *of* something’, on this reading, is an affirmation of the claim of section II that all experience involves apprehension of being, on the grounds that there is no other way to account for our comprehension of the concept ‘being’. Given this, we must apprehend either mind-dependent being or mind-independent being. The ‘first interpretation’ ‘destroys itself’, on this reading, because mind-dependence is a passive notion, but our concept ‘being’ is not the concept of something passive, as pointed out in section IV. Thus, the being we comprehend and hence apprehend cannot be mind-dependent: we must apprehend mind-independent being.

This argument, if it works, would obviously succeed in disproving both indirect realism and phenomenism. Both of these theories claim that we apprehend only mind-dependent being: indirect realism claims that mind-independent being lies beyond the beings we apprehend, and phenomenism denies the existence of mind-independent being altogether. Moreover, as we shall see, the second premise of the argument, that mind-dependent being is an

incoherent notion, is sufficient on its own to disprove forms of indirect realism and phenomenism that claim that we are aware of mind-dependent entities. The argument would also disprove intentionalism, on the grounds that experience is not, for intentionalists, itself an apprehension of mind-independent being. Perceptual experience is independent of the reality it represents, on this view, because the same experience could occur as an hallucination. For this reason, the intentionalist construal of experience is compatible with a phenomenalist construal of reality, as mentioned in 2.3. But the argument, as we shall see, does not go through, since we need not accept the first premise, that we understand ‘being’ by apprehending being. Before assessing the first premise of this form of the ontological proof, however, I will assess the second.

This is the claim that the notion of passive existence is ‘nonsense’ (B&N: xxxv) because it involves a category mistake: passivity cannot be literally ascribed to existence any more than flight can be literally ascribed to time; ‘passivity can not concern (*concerner*) the actual being of the passive existent’ (B&N: xxxiv). It is undeniable that if the existence of a thing consists in being perceived, then that thing exists passively. Being perceived is a passive notion: it is something that happens to a thing. Of course, being perceived does not involve any change in the intrinsic properties of a thing, in the way that changing from red to green does, but it does nevertheless involve a change in the thing’s relational properties: when something is perceived, it enters into the relation of being perceived. And this relational property is conferred on it by the perceiving of it. If a thing’s existence consists in being perceived, then, its existence is something that happens to it.

Sartre’s claim that passivity cannot be ascribed to existence hinges on his analysis of the notion of passivity. ‘I am passive’, he argues, ‘when I undergo a modification of which I am not the origin; that is, neither the source nor the creator’ (B&N: xxxiv). Passivity is a notion that applies to changes in a thing that do not originate in that thing. ‘Thus passivity is a doubly relative

phenomenon, relative to the activity of the one who acts and to the existence of the one who suffers' (B&N: xxiv). In order to undergo change, passively or otherwise, a thing must already exist, so a thing's existence cannot itself be passive. The existence of an entity cannot be something that happens to it, since before the entity's existence there is no 'it' for something to happen to. Passivity 'is a relation of one being to another being and not of one being to a nothingness' (B&N: xxxiv). Since an object cannot perform an action on nothing but can only act on an existing thing, the passivity involved in being acted on requires already existing. Sartre re-iterates this point later in terms of action: since only existing things can act on other things, to be active similarly requires already existing:

'Being ... is neither passivity nor activity. ... being is not active; in order for there to be an end and means, there must be being; ... it can not be passive, for in order to be passive, it must be'

(B&N: xl-xli).

The trouble with this analysis is that the claim that appearances are mind-dependent need not be the claim that we are acquainted only with passive *beings*. It might be that I am only ever acquainted with my own substantial mind, the appearances which I take to reveal reality are not entities but properties of my mind. Although Sartre follows Hume (1978, 252) in denying that we are ever aware of any such entity as a mind or self (TE: 48-9), Sartre's argument, like Hume's, is that we are never aware of a mind or self distinct from the experiences that purport to reveal the world. Both Sartre and Hume fail to engage with the thought that there are no special experiences that reveal a bare self or ego, but all of our experience is in fact experience of that ego in various states. Sartre also rejects this notion of a substantial mind, however, on the grounds that it leads to a fourth 'embarrassing dualism' that I have so far ignored: 'the dualism of potency and act' (B&N: xxii). If we allow this dualism, he later argues, we cannot escape the reef of solipsism. If minds are entities distinct from the rest of reality, that is, then it is impossible to

prove that any part of reality except my own body is controlled by a mind, and so impossible to prove that there are other minds (B&N: 235).<sup>14</sup> This observation seems patently true: if minds are distinct from bodies and only contingently connected to them, then we can postulate other minds only by analogies between the behaviour of other bodies and the behaviour of our own body, but such analogies are defeasible and all other bodies might be mindless robots. Aside from the problem of how such minds are to interact with physical bodies in a world seemingly governed by physical laws, a problem that arises for this type of indirect realism but not for phenomenism, these minds must not be postulated if we are to have any hope of avoiding solipsism.

Ignoring the possibility of substantial minds, which generates seemingly insoluble problems of other minds and mental causation and is hence 'no longer a live philosophical option' (Kim 1998, 29), we have the argument that the notion of mind-dependent being is incoherent on the grounds that 'being' is not a passive notion: passivity characterises a way in which already existing things can change. Any form of indirect realism or phenomenism that postulates passive, mind-dependent beings, then, is incoherent. Indirect realism and phenomenism must be understood as involving the claim that appearances are properties or modifications of a substantial mind, and may be rejected along with this construal of mind. If the argument is to have any impact on intentionalism, though, the first premise will also have to be proven.

Sartre argues for the first premise by claiming that 'being manifests itself to all in some way, since we can speak of it and since we have a certain comprehension of it' (B&N: xxiv).<sup>15</sup> At first, this seems plainly false: we can understand and use the concept 'unicorn', but do not apprehend unicorns. If his ontological proof aims purely to prove the existence of things corresponding to terms that we understand, then it will be subject to the criticism of the Anselmian and Cartesian ontological arguments for the existence of God that they prove too much. Sartre need not, however, make

the general claim that all terms that we can understand must have their senses conferred on them by experience: he need only claim this of the term ‘being’, or of a certain class of terms of which ‘being’ is a member. As a result, his argument can be understood in terms of Russell’s (1905) distinction between object-dependent and object-independent terms. We understand the term ‘unicorn’ by associating it with a description (say, horse with magical powers and a horn on its head). The meanings of descriptions, and hence the terms associated with them, are object-independent — the fact that such a term has meaning and can be understood does not entail anything about whether or not anything exists answering the description. Terms that cannot be associated with such descriptions, on the other hand, can only gain their sense from the objects and entities to which they apply and hence can be understood only on the basis of apprehension of the entities to which they apply. If they apply to no entities, they are senseless and hence cannot be understood.

Accepting the first premise, then, requires a reason to deny that ‘being’ is a descriptive term.<sup>16</sup> Sartre does not provide such a denial, but his use of Heidegger’s notion of a pre-theoretical comprehension of being here implies that he subscribes to Heidegger’s affirmation that ‘being’ cannot be given a descriptive definition (1962, § 1). Heidegger bases this claim on the maximally universal nature of the term ‘being’ — it applies to everything that is. As Sartre puts it: ‘Being is everywhere’ (B&N: xxxviii). Notice, however, that this observation does not itself provide a non-circular definition of ‘being’, since ‘being’ is contained in the notion of everything that *is*. The maximally universal nature of ‘being’ is related to its not being a real predicate: being is not a property that some entities possess and others lack. As Sartre puts it:

‘being is [not] one of the object’s qualities capable of being apprehended among others ... the object does not possess being ... It *is*. That is the only way to define its manner of being’ (B&N: xxv).

This is why ‘being’ cannot be defined. If definition is to be given by genus and species, then ‘being’ cannot be given a definition: the difference between things that are and things that are not does not depend on the *kinds* of things in question — any kind of thing might or might not be instantiated. And if definition is to be given by necessary (and perhaps also sufficient) conditions of membership of the class defined, then again a non-circular definition of ‘being’ cannot be given: the class of ‘being’ can be defined only as the set of everything that *is*. Thus, it seems that our comprehension of being cannot rest on our (implicitly or explicitly) associating it with a description: there is no description that applies to all and only things that are, but which does not include the notion of being; the only description that fits them all is ‘things that are’. There is no intelligible vocabulary in which to define ‘being’ which does not include that term. Since the term ‘being’ does not gain its sense from a description, it might seem, it must gain its sense from the objects to which it applies, so if we are to understand this term, we must be acquainted with those entities to which it applies.

This form of the ontological proof, then, is not subject to the criticism that it proves too much: it can be applied only to terms that we comprehend yet cannot define. And the link between the indefinability of ‘being’ and the fact that ‘being’ is neither a subject term nor a real predicate restricts the scope of the argument to such terms. Since the argument hinges on recognising that ‘being’ is not a real predicate, moreover, it is not subject to the Kantian criticism of the ontological arguments of Anselm and Descartes either. Those arguments employ ‘being’ as a predicate involved in the definition of God, but this form of Sartre’s ontological proof hinges on recognising that ‘being’ is not a real predicate.

The flaw in the argument, however, is that it is not clear that the indefinability of ‘being’ forces us to accept that our comprehension of ‘being’ is rooted in apprehension of being. We might, rather, embrace Quine’s view that for

something to be or exist is for it to be the value of a bound variable in a theoretical sentence. On this view, experience is not apprehension of being, but simply experience of a varied scene. Observation reports do not pick out entities, but pick out aspects of a field of experience. Reference to objects allows one to pick out the same stimulus of an observation report, as when one says that 'of all the dogs, the one called "Fido" is the one that belongs to Mr Jones'. Individual objects are thus picked out by existential quantification, and types of objects by universal quantification (see Quine 1960, § 49; Quine 1981). Quantified sentences are not observation sentences, but theoretical sentences aimed at predicting future experience in the light of past experience. Since 'being' or 'existence' enters our conceptual scheme only with the formulation of these theoretical sentences, it is a theoretical postulate whose sense is gained from its theoretical role of picking out the same stimulus at different times and places. If this is right, we do not need apprehension of being in order to comprehend 'being': any sort of experience will do, so long as we need to pick out the same stimulus at different times and places.

This point can be adapted to a more Sartrean claim that 'being' is just a theoretical postulate designed to differentiate those aspects of experience that exhibit a certain regularity and resistance to our efforts from those that do not. Imaginative experiences are malleable: the way a thing is imagined to be is dependent on my imagining of it, and can be varied at will (PI: 5-10). A perceptual experience, on the other hand, is not so malleable: although I can see a duck-rabbit picture as a picture of a duck or a picture of a rabbit, I cannot see it as red lines on paper instead of black lines on paper at will. In Sartre's terms, the seen object has 'qualities' which cannot be varied just by will (see 1.3), and has a 'principle of being' which accounts for its resistance to my efforts to change it by action (see 2.3). We can account for the comprehension of 'being', therefore, in terms of this resistance: we understand what it is for an experienced object to *be* rather than be simply imagined because we encounter the resistance of existent objects to our will.

This resistance is compatible with indirect realism, phenomenism, and intentionalism. No matter how experience is construed, so long as there is resistance, there can be comprehension of ‘being’. This Sartrean reworking of Quine’s theory of the comprehension of ‘being’ allows us to criticise Sartre’s argument from within his own philosophy. We do not need to embrace Quinean, or any other, principles that might be controversial on other grounds in order to conclude that we do not need to apprehend being in order to comprehend ‘being’. We need only encounter resistance.

Sartre has not shown, therefore, that experience must be construed as apprehension of mind-independent being in order to account for our comprehension of ‘being’. On the contrary, his own emphasis on the importance of the resistance of things to our will, a resistance which can hardly be denied, provides an alternative explanation of our comprehension of ‘being’. And this alternative explanation is entirely independent of the theory of the nature of experience itself. Sartre’s observation that being is not a passive notion, however, does provide grounds for rejecting both indirect realism and phenomenism: as we have seen, Sartre’s observation that ‘mind-dependent being’ is an incoherent notion forces indirect realism and phenomenism to construe experiences as modifications of a substantial mind, and postulating this substantial mind leads inexorably to solipsism. So if solipsism is to be avoided, so are substantial minds, and so therefore are indirect realism and phenomenism. But this argument on Sartre’s behalf still fails to show that perceptual experience is apprehension of mind-independent reality rather than a representation of it that involves no subjective objects of awareness. It fails to rule out, that is, current anglophone intentionalism. This form of the ontological proof, then, fails to establish Sartre’s conclusion.

## 2.5 Ontological Proof 2: The Nature of Consciousness

The second way to read Sartre's statement of his 'ontological proof' in section V of 'The Pursuit of Being' is to draw on the discussions, in sections III and IV, of the ontology of consciousness required by the claim that appearances are mind-dependent (see 2.2). 'All consciousness is consciousness of something', on this interpretation, means just that consciousness is apprehension of objects. The claim that these objects are mind-dependent 'destroys itself' because the notion of mind-dependent objects both requires and is incompatible with a certain ontology of consciousness. This argument, if it worked, would disprove both indirect realism and phenomenism, which postulate mind-dependent objects, but it would leave intentionalism untouched, because intentionalism postulates no such entities. As we shall see, however, the argument is multiply flawed, and Sartre has shown *neither* that mind-dependent objects require a certain ontology of consciousness *nor* that they are incompatible with it.

The argument has five stages. First, if appearances are mind-dependent, then the consciousness on which they depend must be ontologically independent or self-sufficient. Second, this independence must be grounded on transparent self-awareness: consciousness is independent, on this view, because the necessary and sufficient condition of consciousness is that it is conscious of itself. Third, in order for appearances to depend on consciousness, consciousness must act on them to 'give being' to them (B&N: xxxv). Fourth, 'the principle of action and reaction' requires that if consciousness can act on anything, then consciousness can itself be acted on (B&N: xxxv). But, fifth, an ontologically independent consciousness founded entirely on its own transparent self-awareness, as required by mind-dependent being, cannot be acted on from outside. Therefore, it cannot act on anything. Therefore, it cannot 'give being' to anything. Therefore, there cannot be mind-dependent being. This argument is not subject to either of the classic criticisms of the Anselmian and Cartesian ontological arguments for the

existence of God. It is not concerned with showing that the fact that we have an idea of being requires the mind-independent existence of being, but rather with showing that the notion of mind-dependent being has contradictory ontological consequences. The argument, moreover, does not rely on treating 'being' as a real predicate that can be included in the definitions of some things, and so is not subject to the Kantian criticism of the Anselmian and Cartesian arguments. But, as we shall see, the argument fails because only one of the five stages of the argument is convincing.

The first claim, that consciousness must be self-dependent if it is to serve as the 'foundation-of-being' for appearances (B&N: xxvii) is not obviously true. There seems no reason to rule out the possibility of the mutual dependence of consciousness and appearance. This circular ontological dependence would not be like a circular causal dependence, which is objectionable because it seems that a later effect cannot cause its earlier cause. Ontological interdependence would not involve temporality. In fact, to say that a is ontologically dependent on b is to say no more than that there is no possible world that contains just a (a is not ontologically independent), minimal possible worlds containing a always contain an entity from a certain list of which b is a member, and in the actual world it is b that accompanies a. So it seems that there is no reason why b should not be dependent on a as well as a on b.

The second claim, moreover, seems arbitrary: why say that the self-sufficiency of consciousness requires its total transparency? Why indeed say that it requires anything? The first and second claims seem to be drawn from Husserl's claim that appearances are immanent in consciousness, that consciousness is self-sufficient, and that consciousness is transparent (1982, § 49). But Sartre is ostensibly not simply describing Husserl's view, but describing a view required by the claim that appearances are mind-dependent, and he has not shown this requirement. Indeed, it seems that the requirement runs the other way: if consciousness is self-sufficient, then it

cannot require the existence of anything that is independent of it. So if consciousness is always consciousness of something, the something that it is consciousness of must be dependent on it. This point supports the phenomenalist reading of Husserl as holding that the transcendent objects of consciousness are constructed out of immanent appearances: if they were not so constructed, consciousness could not be *both* essentially directed towards them *and* ontologically self-sufficient.

The third claim, that consciousness must be able to act on appearances if appearances are to depend on consciousness just seems patently false. The notion of dependence involved in the postulation of mind-dependent appearances is not causal dependence. The claim that for an appearance to be is to be perceived, that is, is not the claim that being perceived somehow *causes* the appearance to come into being. It is the claim that being perceived *is* the being of the appearance: the relation is identity, not causation. We have seen in 2.4 that Sartre rightly objects to this identity claim on the grounds that being perceived is a passive notion but being, or existence, is not. But in this argument, he has switched to the false claim that mind-dependent appearance requires the being of the appearance to be *caused* by awareness of it.

The one convincing stage of the argument is the fourth. The principle of action and reaction itself seems sound. Sartre writes 'it is because my hand can be crushed, grasped, cut, that my hand can crush, cut, grasp' (B&N: xxv). But this example is misleading: my hand's abilities do not require that precisely the same abilities can be exercised on my hand. The point is rather that if my hand can act on anything, it must be possible to act on the hand. Ghosts are a better example: if a ghost can move through walls, if when you reach out to touch a ghost your hand moves right through it as if through empty space, then ghosts cannot harm you physically — if one attempts to touch you or to pick up a weapon, it will fail for the same reason that you cannot touch it.

But the application of this principle to the relation between consciousness and appearance, in the fifth and final stage of the argument, is unjustified. Even if we were to grant that consciousness is self-sufficient, and that this self-sufficiency is grounded on its transparency, and that it must be able to act on appearances if appearances are mind-dependent, the argument would still fail at this stage, for three reasons. The claim is that an ontologically self-sufficient consciousness must be spontaneous, and this spontaneity rules out the possibility of consciousness being acted on from outside. The first problem with this claim is the move from ontological self-sufficiency to spontaneity. Given a realist view of the existence of objects, for example, the table in front of me does not depend on me for its existence — indeed, it does not depend on anything; there is a possible world containing just this table. But this independence does not entail that the future states of the table are entirely dictated by its own internal states. Although the table's natural change and decay is partly dependent on its internal constitution, it is also partly dependent on the make-up of the table's immediate environment: the same table will last longer in a vat of liquid nitrogen than in a vat of sulphuric acid. On Sartre's own view in *Being and Nothingness*, moreover, being in-itself is ontologically self-dependent (hence its name) but does not exhibit spontaneity. Rather, the world formed out of it is governed by predictable deterministic causal relations (e.g. B&N: 445).

The second problem is that Sartre's claim that the spontaneity of consciousness precludes its being acted on from outside is equally unwarranted. The common-sense conception of humans, for example, construes the behaviour of humans as self-directed in a way that the behaviour of billiard balls is not: a billiard ball must be impacted on from outside if it is to begin to move or change its course, whereas humans are more pro-active. But humans can still be impacted on from outside: they can be (literally) pushed around, or worse. The third problem is that Sartre assumes without argument that principles drawn from our experience of interacting entities, principles we take to govern the interaction of entities

which we observe, should also govern interaction between entities we observe and our observation of them. Strawson (1979, 52), for example, argues that the principle that a cause and its effect should be distinct entities is applicable only to causal relations between observable entities, so is not applicable to the relation (which he takes to be causal) between an entity observed and the observation of that entity. Sartre has not ruled out the parallel claim that although the principle ‘the passivity of the recipient demands an equal passivity on the part of the agent’ is true of observable entities, it may not be true of the relation between such entities and consciousness.

Sartre seems to have based this final stage of the argument on Husserl’s claim that a transparent and ontologically independent consciousness ‘cannot be affected by any physical thing and cannot exercise causation upon any physical thing’ (1982, § 49). This silent reliance on Husserl’s position as representative of the claim that appearances are mind-dependent is responsible for many of the flaws of the argument. Sartre presents aspects of Husserl’s position as though there were inexorable links between them, and so must be assented to by anyone affirming the mind-dependence of appearances. But there are no inexorable links between these claims, so the argument fails. Sartre’s strategy of simultaneously attempting to both distance himself from Husserl and establish his own position, without explicitly stating the former aim, is not only responsible for much misreading of the discussion of consciousness in ‘The Pursuit of Being’, then, it is also partly responsible for the failure of this form of his ontological proof.

## 2.6 Conclusions

We have seen that much misunderstanding of 'The Pursuit of Being' results from understanding it as a linear argument comprising only claims that Sartre himself agrees with. It is rather a complex dialectic whose protagonists are not clearly distinguished. The major misunderstanding results from reading the discussion of consciousness in section III as an exposition of Sartre's own view rather than a discussion of a view ascribed to Husserl, a view that Sartre himself had previously held, for the purposes of arguing against it. The overall aim of the passage is to argue that phenomenal consciousness of the environment consists in experience which is a relation to, and hence dependent on, mind-independent reality. Since this is the aim of the introduction, this theory of experience is the foundational claim of *Being and Nothingness*. The proposal that consciousness be construed as self-sufficient is incompatible with this reliance of consciousness on being in-itself, and is part of an argument against the view that experience is entirely independent of being in-itself.

Within that discussion, Sartre does present a paragraph in his own voice in which he argues that there must be some awareness of consciousness if we are to be able to reflect on consciousness and if a sequence of conscious acts is to be motivated by a single overarching goal such as counting cigarettes. If the foundational theory of *Being and Nothingness* is the claim that consciousness consists in apprehension of mind-independent reality, Sartre's own view of (pre-reflective) self-consciousness must be parasitic on this view of phenomenal consciousness. If the nature of consciousness is its direction on being in-itself, that is, and all consciousness involves a form of self-consciousness, then that form of self-consciousness must be a result of the nature of consciousness, a result of the apprehension of being in-itself. As Sartre puts it towards the end of 'The Pursuit of Being':

'consciousness (of) consciousness ... must be qualified in some way, and it can be qualified only as a revealing intuition of something or it is nothing ... subjectivity can be established only in the face of something revealed; immanence can be defined only within the apprehension of a transcendent' (B&N: xxxvii)

Rather than construe the nonthetic awareness of pre-reflective self-awareness as a relation to the awareness of reality, then, akin to the nonthetic awareness I have of qualitative aspects of the figure of my positional awareness and the nonthetic awareness I have of the ground of that figure, this nonthetic awareness must be construed as resulting from phenomenal consciousness. This can result from phenomenal consciousness by that consciousness being implied by the way in which it presents objects. Positing an object as 'this' or 'that', for example, implies that the object posited is *other* than the act of positing it (see B&N: 122, 174). The thetic character of experience, moreover, implies the aims of consciousness by classifying objects in certain ways: 'the order of instruments in the world is the image of my possibilities projected into the in-itself; that is, the image of what I am' (B&N: 292; see also B&N: 200, 263). Seeing something as a chair implies the possibility of sitting on it. Sartre's claim that 'things ... offer to me their potentialities as a replica of my non-thetic consciousness (of) my own possibilities', then, is misleading.<sup>17</sup> His position is not that the determinations applied in experience replicate prior self-awareness, but that they imply structures of consciousness and pre-reflective self-awareness consists in the implication. Such an implication is sufficient to motivate a shift of attention toward that which is implied, to focus on it and make it explicit (see PI: 188; B&N: xxix, 74, 156). If joy is 'presence to a laughing and open world full of happy perspectives' (B&N: 173), recognition of these happy perspectives can motivate reflection on the experience of them.

Understanding pre-reflective self-awareness in this way resolves an apparent contradiction in the paragraph of 'The Pursuit of Being' in which Sartre claims

(in his own voice) that pre-reflective awareness accounts for the fact that 'if anyone should ask "What are you doing there?" I should reply at once, "I am counting'" (B&N: xxix). This appears to contradict the claim preceding it that pre-reflective awareness does not deliver knowledge of consciousness, since 'children who are capable of making an addition spontaneously cannot *explain* subsequently how they set about it' (B&N: xxix). The contradiction is resolved if the ability to reply without reflection 'I am counting' is due to the presentation of the twelfth cigarette to be counted as the twelfth cigarette, which implies the action of counting the cigarettes. '[A]t the moment when these cigarettes are revealed to me as a dozen, I have a non-thetic consciousness of my adding activity' (B&N: xxix). The implication of the structures of consciousness by the way in which the world is presented is not sufficient, however, for knowledge about the *way* in which conscious operations, such as counting or addition, are performed; it implies only which operations are being performed.

Sartre's claim that pre-reflective self-awareness accompanies all consciousness, then, can be accounted for without ascribing to him the claim that consciousness is *founded on* self-awareness: it can be construed as an upshot of the way in which consciousness presents objects. The nature of consciousness, then, is revelation of being; self-awareness is a result of this revelation.

'The Pursuit of Being' is concerned to establish this basic structure of phenomenal consciousness as revelation of being in-itself. We have seen that Sartre provides three arguments for this conclusion. Sartre fails to distinguish two of these, and runs them together as a single 'ontological proof'. As we have seen, both of these ontological proofs are sufficiently different from the ontological arguments for the existence of God provided by Anselm and Descartes, after which they are named, to avoid being subject to the classic criticisms of those arguments. But we have also seen that these arguments fail anyway. The first, that apprehension of being in-itself is required to account for our comprehension of 'being' overlooks the possibility that our

comprehension of 'being' is based on our experience of the regularity and resistance of objects. This argument involves the observation that existence cannot be passive, and so cannot be mind-dependent, which forces indirect realists and phenomenologists to postulate a substantial mind of which experiences are properties, and this substantial mind may be rejected on other grounds. But even this argument, built from part of one of Sartre's, fails to show that perceptual experience is apprehension of mind-independent reality rather than representation of it that does not involve mind-dependent objects. The second, that mind-dependent appearances both require and are inconsistent with a certain conception of consciousness, is flawed at just about every stage, and anyway could not rule out intentionalism as a theory of experience even if it was not flawed. So neither of Sartre's 'proofs' of his conception of experience succeed in proving it. And, ironically, the troublesome § III that appears to present Sartre's own theory of self-awareness but does not, is involved only in the most flawed version of the ontological proof, and so could be excised from the introduction to *Being and Nothingness* without that introduction suffering any important loss of content or force.

The third argument is that conceiving of phenomenal consciousness as apprehension of mind-independent reality is necessary to avoid Humean scepticism. We have seen that this conception of consciousness is indeed necessary for this aim, and that this aim should be pursued (2.3). But this is not the same as agreeing that Sartre has established his conception of consciousness. In particular, there are powerful motivations for denying it, motivations that have driven much of the philosophy of mind for the past four centuries against such a construal. These are the problems of how hallucination is to be accounted for without construing experience as independent of reality that lies beyond it, and how to fit this notion of experience into our scientific conception of reality. These problems are the subjects of chapters 3 and 4.

## Chapter 3

# Disjunctivism: Perception and Hallucination

Sartre, as we have seen in chapter 1, holds that perceptual experience consists in direct apprehension of or acquaintance with a part of mind-independent reality, 'direct' in the sense that the experience itself renders a part of mind-independent reality available for non-dependent demonstrative reference. The subject of the experience, that is, can pick out the perceived object by the use of such terms as 'this' and 'that' purely on the basis of the experience alone. Indirect realists, phenomenalists, and intentionalists all deny this. They all claim that the experience involved in a perception is in principle independent of the object perceived, so that any demonstrative reference made to a part of the world is a dependent demonstrative reference, dependent on the part of the world being connected in some way to a demonstratively identifiable experience. In the case of indirect realism and intentionalism, this is the claim that the perceived object can only be referred to as 'that which caused *this* experience' or 'that which *this* experience represents', and in the case of phenomenalism it is 'that part of the world that *this* experience partly constitutes' (see 2.1).

The most popular argument against construing perceptual experience as direct apprehension is the argument from hallucination. This argument attempts to establish that the experience involved in a perception is an experience that could in principle have occurred in the absence of the perceived object and so is in principle independent of that object. The experience itself is a 'highest common factor' or 'single common element' that forms part of a perception but may also occur as an hallucination. The kind of hallucinations postulated in this argument are not simple misperceptions of parts of the world. A dehydrated desert traveller, for example, may ordinarily be said to hallucinate an oasis, but if this is a misperception of the hazy air above the hot sand in the distance, this kind of experience is classified as an illusion rather than an hallucination by philosophers of perception. The kind of hallucination that the argument is based on is the kind where there is no obvious object of misperception in the subject's environment, as when a schizophrenic, someone in a drug-induced state, or someone who has spent a prolonged period with little or no changing sensory stimulation such as an astronaut in a single-handed space flight, has an experience whose content is radically at odds with the surrounding environment, such as seeming to see dragons (see Gregory 1998, 199). More mundanely, the visual experiences involved in dreaming cannot be considered to be misperception of the immediate environment not only because of the incongruity of the dream content with the environment but also because the dreamer's eyes are closed.

The argument from hallucination aims to show, by one route or another, that any perceptual experience could in principle occur as an hallucination and hence occur in the absence of the object actually perceived. If this is true, then the experience involved in a perception is indeed a factor or element common to perceptual and hallucinatory states, and so the experience itself cannot ground nondependent demonstrative reference to the perceived object. If an hallucination does not afford direct demonstrative reference to part of the world, and the experience involved in a perception could occur as an hallucination, then that experience does not itself ground direct

demonstrative reference to part of the world. In order to maintain the view that perceptual experience affords direct demonstrative reference to the perceived object, then, the argument from hallucination must be blocked. Sartre's work in this area has been overlooked in the secondary literature, to the extent that the only commentator who refers to the issue writes:

'How does [Sartre] cope with ... hallucination? The short and extraordinary answer is that he does not. Despite the absolute centrality of this issue to the truth or even coherence of his view, Sartre says next to nothing about it' (McCulloch 1994, 107).

On the contrary, I argue in this chapter not only that Sartre provides a way of understanding hallucinations that allows him to resist the argument from hallucination, but also that Sartre's way of resisting this argument is the only viable way of doing so, even though most current defenders of the claim that perceptual experience is apprehension of mind-independent reality do not choose this way. Since the argument from hallucination is aimed at showing that the same experience can occur as either perceptual or hallucinatory, resisting the argument requires the claim that there are two fundamentally distinct types of experience, perceptual and hallucinatory, and so a perceptual experience could not occur as an hallucinatory one. This response has become known as disjunctivism: an experience is *either* perceptual or hallucinatory; there is no experience common to the two kinds of event. What may have confused Sartre scholars is that he couches his unique form of disjunctivism in terms of a distinction between perception and imagination rather than perception and hallucination (IPC: throughout; PI: throughout; B&N: 258, 600). But he does clearly class hallucinations and dreams as forms of imaginative experience (PI: 171-206).

The argument Sartre uses to establish the distinction between perceptual and imaginative experiences is a neat reversal of one traditional form of the argument from hallucination. He argues that if an imaginative experience were

not a distinct kind of experience from a perceptual one, then we would have no reliable way of telling when we are imagining or indeed when we are perceiving. Of course, many theorists have proposed criteria for distinguishing between them, but no such criterion could ever be adequate to the task. Since we can and do tell when we are imagining and when we are perceiving, he argues, these experiences must be distinct (IPC: throughout; reaffirmed at PI: 11; B&N: 26, 108). The trouble with this argument is that a proponent of the argument from hallucination can accept that *most* uses of mental imagery involve a type of experience distinct from that involved in a perception while still insisting that at least some hallucinations and dreams involve the same kind of experience as is involved in perception. And they can support this claim by appeal to the fact that hallucinations and dreams can mislead the subject so that the subject behaves as though the hallucinated or dreamed scenario were a real, perceived scenario. Even though other forms of non-perceptual experience are not misleading in this way, they can insist, some are, and that is all that matters. For this reason, this chapter is concerned not with Sartre's theories of imagination as such, but more narrowly with his theories concerning hallucinations and dreams. Indeed, we will see in 3.5 that Sartre's strategy of construing hallucinations and dreams as involving the same kind of experience as is involved in the deliberate and non-misleading use of mental imagery means that a central plank of his theory of hallucinating and dreaming is irrelevant for present purposes. But, as the chapter as a whole is intended to show, the other central plank of his theory provides just what is needed to resist the argument from hallucination.

Before turning to Sartre's work considered as a response to the argument from hallucination, it is crucial to ascertain just what is and is not required in order to block that argument. In the first section of this chapter I distinguish two forms of the argument and isolate the central challenge presented. I also consider Sartre's claim in *Being and Nothingness* that the argument from hallucination is self-defeating and find that it misses the point of the argument. In section 3.2 I distinguish two forms of disjunctivist response to the argument

from hallucination, the strong and weak forms. Anglophone opponents of the argument from hallucination tend to embrace the weak form, but Sartre's position in *The Psychology of Imagination* is, I argue, a form of strong disjunctivism. On this view, a token perceptual experience should not be understood as an event lying at the end of a causal chain linking object to brain, but should be identified with that causal chain. In 3.3 I argue that there is a form of the argument from hallucination concerned with token experiences, much overlooked by anglophone philosophers primarily interested in types of event, which shows ultimately that weak disjunctivism is explanatorily inadequate: it precludes any explanation of why a perceptual rather than hallucinatory experience (or vice versa) occurred on any given occasion. If this is right, then the strong disjunctivism that Sartre subscribes to is the only form of disjunctivism that resists all forms of the argument from hallucination.

But the unpopularity of strong disjunctivism is not unmotivated, and the rest of the chapter is concerned with whether Sartre's position can resist the motivation for the generative theory based on the behaviour of hallucinating subjects: if a subject hallucinating a glass of water goes through the same resulting bodily movements as a subject seeing one, and if hallucination is experience in the absence of a real object that is experienced, then the experience that explains the same behaviour in both cases is independent of any real object of experience. And this, of course, is exactly what Sartre must deny. So long as hallucination is considered to be an experience in the absence of any experienced object, this argument will be devastating to strong disjunctivism. Sartre, however, makes the radical move of denying this traditional account of hallucination. Sartre claims to have provided an 'ontological proof' of his conception of perceptual experience (although, as we saw in chapter 2, neither of the two 'proofs' he provides and fails to distinguish succeed in establishing this conclusion), and further claims that 'there is one ontological proof valid for the whole domain of consciousness' (B&N: xxxix). He takes his proof to show, that is, that 'consciousness is born supported by a

being which is not itself' (B&N: xxxvii). So Sartre holds that even hallucinatory experience is a form of apprehension of part of mind-independent reality. By distinguishing the object of apprehension from the intentional object in hallucinatory cases, and relatedly distinguishing perceptual from hallucinatory experiences not in terms of the presence or absence of objects but in terms of the attitude of consciousness involved, Sartre provides a coherent account of how hallucination can involve an object of apprehension and hence blocks this second motivation for denying strong disjunctivism. These issues are discussed in 3.4 and 3.5. I conclude that Sartre's work on imaginative experience makes a highly original and valuable contribution to current debates over perceptual consciousness, providing precisely the theoretical framework required to defend the view of perceptual experience as apprehension of mind-independent reality against all objections based on the occurrence of hallucinations and dreams.

### **3.1 Hallucination and Types of Experience**

The argument from hallucination has traditionally been the mainstay of opposition to the claim that perceptual *experience* itself is apprehension of mind-independent reality. Construing hallucinatory experiences as phenomenally or epistemically indistinguishable from perceptual experiences but occurring in the absence of the object that must be present in genuine perception, the argument from hallucination attempts to show that the experience involved in a perception is an event of the same type as occurs in a matching hallucination. The experience I have when I see the Eiffel Tower, hallucination arguments attempt to show, is an experience that I could have had in the absence of the Eiffel Tower, an experience I could have had as an hallucination, and so does not require the presence of the actual Eiffel Tower. The experience is a 'highest common factor' or 'single common element' involved in both a perception of the Eiffel Tower and its matching hallucination; the difference between perception and hallucination is

extraneous to the experience itself, and is a matter of the relation between the experience and the rest of the world. This conclusion is, in other words, the 'two-component' view of perception held by indirect realists, phenomenalists, and intentionalists. Sartre and other proponents of the view that perceptual experience itself is apprehension of mind-independent reality are opposed to this 'two-component' view, and hence must resist the conclusion of the argument from hallucination.

There are two common forms of argument from hallucination. The first is based on the claim that for any perceptual experience there is an hallucinatory experience that is epistemically or phenomenally indistinguishable from it. Since there is no more to an experience than the experiencing of it, the argument runs, phenomenally or epistemically indistinguishable experiences must be metaphysically indistinguishable. You are now perceiving this page, but if you were hallucinating you would not be able to tell that you were hallucinating, and so, this argument claims, the visual experience you are now having is one you could be having even if you were hallucinating. There is, therefore, a single type of experience common to a perception and its matching hallucination (e.g. Davies 1992, 25-6; McGinn 1997, 49-52).

This argument relies on a contentious characterisation of hallucinatory experience: why should we think of hallucinations as experiences that are phenomenally or epistemically indistinguishable from perceptions? Of course, we all know that we can be taken in by dreams and hallucinations, be carried away with them and act, feel, and later remember in ways appropriate to the dreamed or hallucinated events actually having happened. But the same is true of films and even novels, so does not seem to establish phenomenal or epistemic indistinguishability. Unless, of course, phenomenal or epistemic indistinguishability is defined so broadly as to take in these cases, in which case it will not be strong enough to support the claim that phenomenally indistinguishable experiences are experiences of the same kind.

But even granting this somewhat arbitrary characterisation of hallucination, commonly accepted by philosophers, this argument will still fail to disprove Sartre's view of perceptual experience as apprehension of an object that can be singled out by direct demonstrative reference in virtue of the experience. The reason for this failure is that the crucial principle on which the argument turns, the principle that connects the epistemic or phenomenal indistinguishability of a pair of experiences to the claim that they are experiences of the same type, begs the question against Sartre's view. The principle is *that the experience just is the way the world seems to the subject*, from which it follows that the experience will be the same whether the subject is perceiving or hallucinating: the world seems the same way in either case. But since Sartre holds that a perceptual experience affords direct demonstrative reference to the seen object as 'this' (see 1.1), Sartre holds that an experience is *not* exhausted by the way the world seems: when I am perceiving the Eiffel Tower, my experience grounds my ability to single out and demonstratively identify the Eiffel Tower; when I am hallucinating the Eiffel Tower I have no such ability (see Martin 1997, 94).

Opponents of Sartre's position will, of course, describe this ability to demonstratively identify parts of reality on the basis of an experience as the ability to refer to whatever part of the world is appropriately related to that experience, if there is such a part of reality. But the fact that Sartre's opponents have an alternative story to tell about this ability does not in itself undermine Sartre's story. The contrast between these two stories, moreover, is just a manifestation of the basic distinction between Sartre's position and the theories that oppose it: only the view of perceptual experience as apprehension of mind-independent reality construes perceptual experience in such a way that the subject can single out perceived objects by direct (non-dependent) demonstrative reference rather than as some correlate of a demonstratively identifiable experience (see 2.1). And Sartre's construal of perceptual experience allows that two epistemically or phenomenally

indistinguishable experiences will be different experiences if they ground demonstrative reference to different entities or objects. If James and John are identical twins, then seeing James may be epistemically or phenomenally indistinguishable from seeing John, but on Sartre's conception of experience the two experiences will differ in that one is an experience *of* James, affording direct demonstrative reference to James, and the other is an experience *of* John. So Sartre's position is incompatible with the principle that epistemically or phenomenally indistinguishable experiences are metaphysically indistinguishable, even when the epistemically indistinguishable experiences are both perceptual. Therefore any argument against Sartre's position that employs that principle begs the question.

The second common form of the argument from hallucination does not employ that offending principle. Instead of hinging on an a priori principle about the nature of experiences, this form of the argument from hallucination is based on a claim about the causal aetiology of perceptual experiences and a general principle about the nature of causation. When I see a bus, for example, light that is reflected from the bus travels in a straight line to my eyes where it forms images on my retinas, which in turn excite my optic nerves, which in turn cause certain events to occur in the visual cortex of my brain. Given this, the argument has two premises. First, the causal story that links seer to object seen is an account of the causal aetiology of experience: *the experience itself is caused by neural stimulation*. Second, causal relations hold between events in virtue of the types of events they are, so *the type of brain event or state that generates a certain type of experience will bring about that type of experience regardless of how the brain event or state itself was brought about*. When I see a bus, then, there is a certain type of excitation of my visual cortex. Since this type of neural activity is sufficient for me to have an experience of the type I have when I see a bus, it is sufficient for me to have that type of experience even in the absence of any bus. Since the type of neural activity involved may be brought about by artificial stimulation of my retinas or visual cortex, the type of experience involved

when I see a bus might also occur as an artificially stimulated hallucination. A single type of experience, therefore, may occur as either a perception or an hallucination (see Malebranche 1997, 10-11; Berkeley 1975, 147-8; O'Shaughnessy 1980, vol. 2, 142; Foster 1985, 148-9; Robinson 1985, 170-7).

Sartre recognises that philosophical opposition to the conception of experience as apprehension of mind-independent reality is often motivated by a picture of perception according to which a causal chain of events linking the perceived object to the brain ends with an experience or sensation which is separate and isolated from other events and which is a perceptual experience only in virtue of it being correctly linked up to the object (see B&N: 312-4). But Sartre attacks the idea that this picture provides good grounds for philosophical opposition to his conception of perceptual experience. His attack echoes the opening pages of *Being and Nothingness*: unless perceptual experience is construed as apprehension of mind-independent reality, we cannot confidently assert any empirical claims about the structure of reality, including the causal processes involved in experience. So any argument based on those causal processes which aims to show that perceptual experience is not itself apprehension of reality will undermine its own premises (compare Price 1932, ch. 2). I will spell out Sartre's argument in detail in order to show just what is wrong with it.

Sartre's argument is in two stages. First, the picture of perception that arises from observing the physical processes involved in perception is a form of indirect realism (or, we may add, intentionalism). But this theory of perception does not allow the proponent of the argument from hallucination to confidently assert knowledge of physical processes, since it precludes knowledge of reality beyond the veil of experience. In order to claim knowledge of the causal processes involved in perception, the proponent of this form of the argument from hallucination must drop the commitment to a mind-independent reality beyond the veil of experience, and instead embrace the phenomenalist construal of reality as constructed out of mind-dependent

experience (see also Bennett 1971, 68-70). Second, this phenomenalist construal of our empirical knowledge is incompatible with the claim that experiences are events that occur at the end of a causal chain of physical events leading back to the object perceived. Therefore, the proponent of this form of the argument from hallucination must accept a theory that undermines the motivation for holding it. As Sartre summarises it:

‘My perception of the Other’s senses serves me as a foundation for an explanation of sensations and in particular of *my* sensations, but reciprocally my sensations thus conceived constitute the only *reality* of my perception of the Other’s senses. In this circle the same object – the Other’s sense organ – maintains neither the same nature nor the same truth throughout each of its appearances. It is at first *reality*, and then because it is reality it finds a doctrine that contradicts it.’ (B&N: 315; compare 320-1)

Sartre’s argument, however, fails to show that this form of the argument from hallucination is invalid. To show just what is wrong with Sartre’s argument, I will deal with its two stages in reverse order. It has been argued that the picture of perception as involving a causal chain of events leading up to an experience is *not* incompatible with phenomenism. Robinson claims that there is no reason why phenomenologists cannot reinterpret this claim in terms of actual and possible experiences, just as they must reinterpret every claim about the nature of reality (1985, 172). Valberg goes further and argues that since phenomenism can accept this picture, phenomenism is vulnerable to this form of the argument from hallucination: the whole argument can be rewritten in phenomenalist terms to show that we are never directly aware of reality in the way that the phenomenalist claims we are (1992, 162-4). But what these two claims overlook is that since phenomenism construes reality as a sequence of actual and possible experiences regulated by some principle or set of principles, a phenomenalist reinterpretation of the claim that

experience is an event lying at the end of a causal chain of events observable by a third party will be the claim that the regular covariance between one person's experiences and another person's observation of the first person's environment and neural system will be due to the basic principles governing the sequences of actual and possible experiences that make up reality: there will be no relation of dependence, causal or otherwise, between the first person's experience and the other's observation of the first person's environment and neural system; each set of experiences will be solely dependent on the underlying rules of reality. Although it will remain true that if the subject has a perceptual experience, then a causal chain of events linking the perceived object to that subject's neural system could have been observed, there is no reason to construe the subject's experience as an event at the end of this causal chain, generated by the neural stimulation. Yet this is the claim required for this form of the argument from hallucination. So Sartre is right to claim that phenomenologists cannot assert a relation of causal dependence between an experience and the sequence of physical events that precedes it.

But the fact that a phenomenologist cannot confidently assert this causal relation does not prevent a phenomenologist from using it as a premise in an argument against the view that perceptual experience consists in apprehension of reality. And the fact that indirect realists and intentionalists cannot confidently assert facts about the reality beyond experience does not prevent them from using this causal claim in such an argument either, and for this reason the first stage of Sartre's argument is flawed: the indirect realists' use of a claim about reality in an argument against opponents does not force them to abandon the claim that reality lies beyond appearances. This is because the use of premises in an argument against a particular position does not require the *proponent of the argument* to have good reason to assert those premises. It requires only that the *proponents of the position being argued against* agree with those premises. If the target position leads to affirmation of the premises, and the conclusion which follows from those premises is incompatible with

that target position, then the argument functions as a *reductio* of that target position. The target position, that is, will have been shown to undermine itself, regardless of what proponents of rival theories think of the premises (see Russell 1915, 401). If perceptual experience is apprehension of mind-independent reality, and perceptual experience reveals a certain causal chain of events to be involved in perception, then that causal chain of events must be involved in perception. Proponents of the claim that perceptual experience is apprehension of mind-independent reality, such as Sartre, must therefore accept this scientific picture of perception. Given this picture of perception, this form of the argument from hallucination has just two premises, and is valid. So proponents of the view that perceptual experience is apprehension of mind-independent reality must reject at least one of those premises, on pain of undermining their own position.

Proponents of this view of perceptual experience, such as Sartre, must therefore *either* deny that the experience is generated by neural stimulation, or deny that the same type of neural stimulation will generate the same type of experience regardless of how that neural stimulation was itself brought about. As we shall see in the next section, either rejection leads to a disjunctivist theory of the relation between perceptual experience and hallucinatory experience, the theory that perception and hallucination involve different types of experience. The most common form of disjunctivism involves rejection of the second premise, concerned with the nature of causation in general. Sartre's form involves rejection of the first.

### **3.2 Strong and Weak Disjunctivism**

Disjunctivism is available in a variety of flavours, but the common ingredient is the thought that two experiences can be phenomenally or epistemically indistinguishable without being metaphysically indistinguishable. If it seems to Clare as if the bus is approaching, on the non-disjunctivist view of experience,

then Clare is having a certain type of experience which is either perceptual or hallucinatory depending on its relation to her environment. On the disjunctivist picture, on the other hand, Clare is having *either* a perceptual experience *or* an hallucinatory experience: there is no single type of experience common to the two states. (If Clare is subject to an illusion, mistaking a lorry for a bus, for example, then she is still having a *perceptual* experience of a lorry.) In response to the second form of the argument from hallucination, disjunctivists must of course deny that a certain type of excitation of my neural system is sufficient for me to have a certain type of experience: that type of excitation will, according to the disjunctivist, yield a perception if it is caused in the normal way, and an hallucination otherwise. Disjunctivists must, that is, deny that there are true universally quantified conditionals whose antecedents are certain types of neural event and whose consequents are certain types of experience. There are two forms of this denial.

The most common form is weak disjunctivism. This view affirms that a perceptual experience is caused by stimulation of the neural system, but denies that artificial stimulation can bring about the same type of experience as is brought about by ordinary stimulation. The type of experience had is individuated with reference to objects outside the skin of the experiencer, although the experience itself is spatio-temporally located within the skin or skull (see Macdonald 1990). This is Hinton's view: if one's visual cortex is stimulated in the way it would be if one is seeing a flash of light, then 'one visually perceives a flash of light or has the illusion of doing so, according to the nature of the initial stimulus' (1973, 75). The same type of neural event or state will not necessarily bring about the same type of mental event or state; the type of mental event or state that results from a certain type of activity in the visual cortex depends partly on the causal aetiology of that activity (see Hinton 1973, 76-82; Martin 1997, 87 n11). This also appears to be McDowell's view: a perceptual experience is a brain event whose representational content is tied to the seen object or state of affairs in such a way that an experience with that content could not have occurred in the absence of that object or

state of affairs. The content of a perceptual experience ‘can present us with the appearance that it is raining only because when we have [it] as the upshot (in a suitable way) of the fact that it is raining, the fact itself is [its] object’ (1982, 474).<sup>1</sup>

The strong form of disjunctivism, on the other hand, denies that a perceptual experience is generated by excitation of the neural system, claiming instead that the perceptual experience is identical with the causal chain of events between brain and object or state of affairs perceived. Snowdon subscribes to this view when he describes his form of disjunctivism as a denial of ‘the effect thesis’ that seeing involves an experience within the subject caused by events involving the seen object (1981, 191; see 176). Snowdon suggests that we instead ‘treat the seeing as the affecting’, identify the perceptual experience with the causal chain of events linking object and brain (1981, 191). Instead of taking experience and causal chain to be two things, that is, Snowdon recommends we take them to be one: ‘The parsimonious naturalist will incline to the latter’ position (Snowdon 1981, 191). Seeing, on this view, is ‘a relation to a certain object, a non-inner experience (which does not involve ... an inner experience)’ (Snowdon 1990, 130).<sup>2</sup>

There are three reasons why Sartre’s disjunctivism should be construed as a form of strong rather than weak disjunctivism. First, he considers intentionality to be an alternative to representation (see B&N: xxvii), and does not consider the possibility of object-dependent representation. The notion of object-dependent representation, as mentioned in 2.1, is quite foreign to Sartre, as it is a product of an analytic approach to philosophy resulting from a linguistic turn that Sartre never took. To say that perceptual experience is intentional, for Sartre, is to say that it literally (spatiotemporally) includes the object as a part, and so does not occur within the skin. It is to say that perceptual experience is intuition or *connaissance* of an object, apprehension of an object not represented but present ‘in person’ in experience (see 1.1). Second, weak disjunctivism is just the denial that a certain type of stimulation

of the neural system will always cause a certain type of experience. Sartre does not provide a theory of the nature of causal relations anywhere, and does not discuss the nature of perception and hallucination in terms of causal laws. He recommends, moreover, that we do not approach philosophical questions in terms of types or kinds of event, in abstract terms, but rather in terms of token or concrete events (B&N: 3-4). Sartre is therefore not concerned to deny that there are causal laws linking types of neural events to types of experience.

Third, if Sartre were a weak disjunctivist then the discussion of the nature of hallucinations and dreams in *The Psychology of Imagination* would be out of place. Weak disjunctivists, that is, should classify the type of experience involved in an hallucination purely in terms of phenomenal or epistemic indistinguishability from perceptual experience. The weak disjunctivist agrees that a certain type of neural stimulation will result in it seeming to the subject as if, for example, a bus is coming. The weak disjunctivist differs from indirect realists, intentionalists, and phenomenologists in that the weak disjunctivist denies that this seeming has a basic explanatory role in understanding one's mental economy, and so denies that it is a basic type of experience. Instead, the weak disjunctivist assigns a fundamental explanatory role to perceptual experience, and defines hallucinatory ones parasitically, in terms of their indistinguishability from perceptual ones. If Clare's visual cortex is stimulated in the way in which it would be if Clare saw a bus coming, for the weak disjunctivist, then it seems to Clare as if a bus is coming, and it seems this way *either* because Clare is having a perceptual experience of a bus *or* because Clare is having an experience indistinguishable from a perceptual visual experience of a bus. In order to assign the fundamental explanatory role to perceptual experiences, that is, the weak disjunctivist must define the hallucinatory type of experience purely relationally, in terms of the perceptual experience that the hallucination is indistinguishable from (see Martin 1997, 89-90). The complex account of the nature of hallucination that Sartre offers, and which is discussed in 3.5, characterises hallucinatory experience in terms

of the attitude consciousness takes up towards the object of apprehension, an attitude that differs from that involved in perception. Because this is not a classification of hallucinatory experience in terms of the perceptual experience it is purportedly phenomenally or epistemically indistinguishable from, it is not available to the weak disjunctivist.<sup>3</sup>

Sartre should therefore be construed as a strong disjunctivist. He rejects the view that perceptual experiences are generated by brain events or states, the view that an experiencer is a closed box and '[s]ensation is inside the box' (B&N: 314). Denying this view is often overlooked as an option by philosophers on the grounds that they take the view in question to be a scientifically established empirical fact (e.g. Price 1932, 67; Grice 1961, 121; Lewis 1980, 242; Valberg 1992, 10 and 143). But the only empirical facts about perception are those concerned with physical, physiological, and neural processes that occur during perception, the stimulation of those processes, and the behavioural effects of those processes. Any claim about the relation between those empirical facts and the experience to which they are related is a theoretical claim. The view that Sartre rejects, therefore, is the theoretical claim that a token perceptual experience is an event generated by neural stimulation, a claim that I shall refer to as 'the generative theory' (following Hirst 1959, 64-6). It is often pointed out in favour of the generative theory that if I close my eyes, I cease to see, that altering my brain events in other ways alters my experiences, and that if activity in my neural system were to cease I would cease to have experiences altogether (e.g. Valberg 1992, 37 and 146; Dretske 1995, 35-6; Coates 1998, 26). But these considerations do nothing to support the generative theory since they show at most that certain types of neural event are *necessary* for certain types of experience.<sup>4</sup> The generative theory claims that certain token neural events are *sufficient* for certain perceptual experiences, and this is all that Sartre denies.

All disjunctivists, then, deny that there is a single type of experience common to perception and hallucination. The second form of the argument from

hallucination that we considered in 3.1 thereby forces them to deny that the type of event that happens in my brain suffices for the type of experience I have. But this still leaves open the question of whether my *token* brain event generates my *token* experience, the question of whether the generative theory is true. The two forms of disjunctivism differ in their answers to this question: weak disjunctivists accept the generative theory, but deny that the same type of brain event always generates the same type of experience; strong disjunctivists such as Sartre deny the generative theory. Philosophical pressure to accept the generative theory, and hence deny strong disjunctivism, is exerted from the claim that since a perception and its matching hallucination can result in the same behaviour, and the experience that explains this behaviour in the case of hallucination is generated by events within the subject's body, the experience that explains the behaviour in the case of perception must also be generated by events within the subject's body. In 3.4 I explain why this argument for the generative theory can be resisted *only* by denying that hallucination does not involve apprehension of a part of mind-independent reality, and in 3.5 I explain how Sartre's distinction between the object of apprehension and the intentional object in hallucinatory (and other imaginative) experience allows him to make this denial. Before turning to these issues, though, I argue in the next section that disjunctivists *must* reject the generative theory: weak disjunctivism is inadequate to deal with a much overlooked form of the argument from hallucination, but strong disjunctivism is not. Given this, the issue of whether the generative theory can be denied is the issue of whether disjunctivism is tenable.

### 3.3 Token Experiences and Token Externalism

There is a much overlooked form of the argument from hallucination concerned not with types of experience but with the token experience involved in a token perception: it aims to show that this token experience could have occurred in the absence of the object perceived and so cannot be sufficient to

ground direct demonstrative reference to the object perceived. Establishing this conclusion, of course, is establishing the falsity of Sartre's conception of perceptual experience as apprehension of mind-independent reality. The argument is based on the generative theory: if a token experience is caused by the excitation of the neural system, then even if there is no causal or other law connecting the two events qua events of certain types, there is still the token relation of causation between the events considered as tokens. Given the generative theory, then, the token neural stimulation is alone sufficient for the occurrence of the token experience involved in a perception, and since the object seen is no part of the token neural stimulation, the token experience could have occurred in the absence of the object seen. If the token experience is independent of the object in this way, if it could have occurred as an hallucination, the argument runs, then it cannot ground the perceiver's ability to demonstratively identify the object (see Malebranche 1997, 10-11; Valberg 1992, ch. 1).

More formally, this argument adds just one premise to the generative theory to reach its conclusion. This second premise, which I shall refer to as 'the causal claim', states that *a token event could counterfactually have been caused by an event other than the event which in fact caused it*. If  $e_1$  caused  $e_2$ , according to this premise,  $e_2$  could have occurred without  $e_1$  so long as some other event occurred in the place of  $e_1$  and that other event caused  $e_2$ . Although, when I see a table, certain disturbances in my visual cortex are traceable along an actual causal chain back to the event of light bouncing off the table, the same token disturbances could counterfactually have been brought about even if the table had never existed – perhaps by the direct stimulation of my retina by electrodes, or by the agency of God.

The generative theory and the causal claim form the premises of what I shall refer to as 'the causal argument': a token perceptual experience is generated by a token neural stimulation; that token neural stimulation could counterfactually have been brought about in the absence of the object

actually perceived; therefore a token perceptual experience could counterfactually have been brought about in the absence of the object actually perceived. Strong disjunctivists such as Sartre are immune to this argument since they reject the generative theory. But weak disjunctivists accept the generative theory, and so must do one of three things: deny the causal claim; deny that the conclusion follows from the conjunction of the generative theory and the causal claim; or accept the conclusion but deny that it presents any threat to weak disjunctivism.

In order to reject the causal claim, weak disjunctivists must claim that there is a class of token events such that no member of the class could have occurred in the absence of its actual causal aetiology and this class includes token perceptual experiences. In order to make this claim, it is not sufficient to point out that a perception – like a footprint or a photograph – must by definition be caused in a certain way (e.g. Pitcher 1971, 50-7), since this obviously allows that the same token *experience* could occur as a perception or as an hallucination depending on its causal aetiology, which is precisely what all disjunctivists reject.

What is required to deny that any token experience could have occurred in the absence of its actual causal aetiology is a form of causal essentialism according to which there is a class of token events such that it is essential to each member of the class being the event it is that it has as an immediate cause the token event that in fact caused it. So long as token event  $e_2$  is in this class, it is simply not true to claim that  $e_2$  could have occurred in the absence of its actual cause  $e_1$ . Since  $e_2$  was caused by  $e_1$ ,  $e_2$  is essentially caused by  $e_1$ , so unless  $e_1$  had occurred,  $e_2$  could not have occurred. If this causal essentialism is to protect weak disjunctivism from the causal argument, the class of token events that have their causes essentially must include token perceptual experiences and all the token events involved in linking token experiences to perceived objects in perception. If any event in the causal chain reaching from a token perceptual experience of a table back to

the table is outside the class of events that have their causes essentially, then bringing about *that* event in the absence of the table will bring about the rest of the actual causal chain including the resulting experience. Given suitable membership of the class of events that have their causes essentially, then, this causal essentialism would allow weak disjunctivism to resist the causal argument: an experience actually caused by a chain of events leading back to light bouncing off a table could not have been brought about in any other way.

The problem with this causal essentialism, though, is that unless a sufficient motivation can be provided for embracing it an opponent can simply deny it, and it seems that there is no available motivation for it. The motivation, it seems, must be based on an adaptation of Fine's (1994) conception of the relation between essence and definition, so that the properties mentioned in or entailed by the definition of a token event are essential to that token event. The cause of a token event will be essential to it, then, if it is mentioned in or entailed by the identity and individuation criteria that single out that token event in the actual world. Since the cause of a token event is not entailed by any definition of that event except one that explicitly mentions the cause, this form of causal essentialism must embrace the view that there is a class of token events that are identified and individuated (at least partly) by reference to their causes. And herein lies the problem: since the cause of a token event is another token event, as Quine (1985, 166) has pointed out, any definition of token events in terms of their causes already quantifies over token events and hence presupposes a prior individuation criterion for the token events over which it quantifies. Once this prior criterion is in place, there is no room for a second, causal criterion for any token events. It is this problem of circularity that underlies Davidson's rejection of his former view that events are to be identified and individuated by reference to their causal roles (see Davidson 1969, 231; 1985, 175).

It is impossible, therefore, to define a token event by reference to its cause, and in the absence of such a definition it is difficult to see how one could

motivate the claim that the events involved in perception have their causes essentially. Weak disjunctivists cannot, it seems, deny the causal claim by claiming that there is a class of token events such that no member of the class could have occurred in the absence of its actual causal aetiology. This failure to deny the causal claim leaves the weak disjunctivist with two options: deny that the conclusion of the causal argument follows from its premises, or deny that the conclusion is incompatible with weak disjunctivism.

In order to claim that the conclusion of this argument does not in fact follow from the conjunction of the generative theory and the causal claim, weak disjunctivists might exploit the argument's presumption that when I see an object in ordinary ambient light, for example, the object I see is necessarily the one that last reflected or significantly refracted the light that entered my eyes, or in the case of silhouettes and back-lit objects the object that blocked light otherwise heading for my eyes, or in the absence of reflection, significant refraction, or blocking, the one that emitted light directly into my eyes. The argument presumes, that is, that an experience brought about by an object transmitting light into my eyes or blocking light otherwise heading for my eyes is *thereby* a perception of that object.<sup>5</sup> The weak disjunctivist might try to deny this assumption, and thereby maintain both the generative theory and the causal claim while resisting the conclusion of the argument, by construing perception as a relation between perceiver and perceived that is distinct from but brought about by the causal relation. Optical stimulation, to take seeing as an example, delivers information to the visual system, on the basis of which the seer's mind directs its attention to some part of the immediate environment and the ensuing experience consists in a direct relation to the part of the environment attention is directed towards. The experience is brought about by the causal relation between an object and the seer's eyes but is not *thereby* a perception of that object; rather, the experience is a perception of that object in virtue of the experience itself being a separate relation between seer and object. This form of weak disjunctivism, then, agrees that a perceptual visual experience results from the excitation of the

visual cortex but denies that the same experience could occur in the absence of its object (see Coates 1998, 20-5).

In order to avoid collapsing into intentionalism, of course, this form of weak disjunctivism must deny that experience *consists in* having information encoded in a brain state. Instead the information encoded in the brain state must be taken to determine the direction and range of some sort of mental glance and the experience consists in this glance. The information must determine which object in the perceiver's environment is to be glanced at, however, and herein lies the problem with this conception of perception. In the case of visual perception, the object at the centre of visual attention is always the object transmitting light onto the foveal regions of the retinas, or blocking light otherwise heading there. Any theory of vision must allow for this fact. The form of weak disjunctivism under consideration, then, must claim that in such cases the information encoded in the brain state uniquely specifies the object transmitting light onto the foveal regions. Since there may be two objects equidistant from the perceiver and alike in all respects except spatial location, the information encoded in the brain state can single out which object to glance at only by (egocentric or objective) spatial co-ordinates.

But this view, that seeing a part of the world consists in a relation independent of any causal relation but determined by spatial co-ordinates encoded in a brain state, is clearly falsified by experiments involving displacing glasses. Such glasses alter the angle at which light enters the eyes, so that (for example) light deflected from a table to my left will enter my eyes at the angle it would normally have entered at had the table been straight in front of me. The form of weak disjunctivism that we are considering predicts that in such a case (wearing the glasses for the first time, so that my brain has not had time to adjust), I will cast my mental gaze ahead of me toward the location indicated by the message received from my retinas and see whatever is there (not the table, which is to my left). In such a situation, however, I do in fact

see and can describe the table, but I mislocate it in space – it is my behaviour that misfires, not my perception (see Gregory 1998, 138-43).

Only (egocentric or objective) spatial co-ordinates can be relied upon to single out a specific object, then, but experiments involving displacing glasses have shown that visual perception does not consist in an experience directed toward an object in virtue of a set of spatial co-ordinates. Visual perception, therefore, does not consist in a mental glance directed toward an object specified by information encoded in a brain state. This form of weak disjunctivism, therefore, is false. In order to guarantee that an experience brought about by an object transmitting light onto the foveal regions of my retinas, or blocking light otherwise heading for the foveal regions of my retinas, is a perception of that object, we must agree with the presumption of the causal argument that the experience is a perception of that object *in virtue of* that causal relation between the object and the brain. Given this presumption, the causal argument is valid, so the weak disjunctivist is left with the option of denying that the causal argument presents any significant threat.

Weak disjunctivists might argue that the conclusion of the causal argument is incompatible with weak disjunctivism only if it is understood in terms of a conception of token experiences, of experiences as particulars or datable occurrences, that includes reference to experiential type. On a conception of token experiences inspired by Kim's (1973) conception of a token event as the exemplification of a property by an object at a time, a token experience is the having of an experience of a certain type by a particular experiencer at a particular time. If this is what a token experience is, then having the same token experience involves having an experience of the same type, so if an actual token perceptual experience could counterfactually occur in the absence of the seen object, then an experience of the same type as occurs in a perception could occur as an hallucination, which is precisely the 'single common element' or 'highest common factor' view of the relation between perception and hallucination that is denied by all forms of disjunctivism. But

this just shows that the Kimesque conception of token experiences is incompatible with weak disjunctivism, given the causal claim and the presumption of the causal argument. Weak disjunctivists need not be troubled by this, since they can deny that identity and individuation criteria for token experiences make reference to experiential type. They may, for example, appeal to conception of token experiences based on Davidson's (1985, 175) conception of token events as unstructured particulars picked out by their spatiotemporal co-ordinates. On this conception, the same token experience can occur actually as a perceptual experience and counterfactually as an hallucinatory experience: all that matters for sameness of token experience is sameness of spatiotemporal co-ordinates. So the fact that the token perceptual experience could counterfactually have occurred in the absence of the seen object is no threat to weak disjunctivism: had it so occurred, it would not have been a *perceptual* experience affording direct demonstrative reference to a part of the world, but instead the same token experience would have been an experience of the hallucinatory type.

This response to the conclusion of the causal argument on behalf of weak disjunctivism is, so far as it goes, entirely correct. The conclusion of the causal argument is strictly incompatible with weak disjunctivism only given a Kimesque conception of token experiences, a conception that weak disjunctivists can reject. But the response does not go far enough, because the threat posed to weak disjunctivism by the causal argument need not be construed as the establishing of a conclusion incompatible with weak disjunctivism. The causal argument might rather be construed as highlighting an explanatory deficiency of weak disjunctivism. If a token neural stimulation, whose spatiotemporal co-ordinates are all within the subject's body, causes a token experience which might occur as either perceptual or hallucinatory, then what explains whether the experience is perceptual or hallucinatory? What explains the difference in type between the actual perceptual experience and the counterfactual hallucinatory experience when both are claimed to have been generated by the same token neural stimulation?

We have seen in discussing the possibility of causal essentialism that it would be simply arbitrary to deny that the same token neural stimulation could occur with a different causal aetiology, so if there is any possible world in which the token neural stimulation involved in my actual perception of the London Eye generates an hallucinatory experience, then there is no reason to rule out there being a possible world like the actual world in all respects (including causal aetiology of the neural stimulation) except that on that occasion I have an hallucinatory rather than a perceptual experience. I am now perceiving, that is, but if it is possible for my actual token neural stimulation to cause an hallucination, then it is possible for my actual token neural stimulation with its actual causal aetiology to cause an hallucination, so there is no reason why I am not hallucinating.

In appealing to the claim that the same token neural stimulation causes the same token experience but sameness of token experience is independent of whether the experience falls under the perceptual or hallucinatory type, then, weak disjunctivism is hoist by its own petard: it rules out the possibility of any general account of why people have perceptual and hallucinatory experiences when they do. Providing an account of the relation between perceptual and hallucinatory experience that explains why one has the experiences one has is the key aim of theories of experience; any theory that rules out such an account is missing the main course.

So the view that a perceptual experience involves the perceived object in such a way as to ground direct demonstrative reference to it cannot be satisfactorily defended against the causal argument by weak disjunctivism. It allows that the token neural excitation that actually generated a perceptual experience might counterfactually have been the same in all respects but have generated an hallucinatory experience. If the token event that generated a token perceptual experience might just as well have generated an

hallucinatory one, we are left without any possible explanation of why it generated a perceptual as opposed to hallucinatory experience.

What is required to block the causal argument satisfactorily is not the type-externalism of weak disjunctivism, but a token-externalist conception of experiences. What is required is the claim that a token perceptual experience is not generated by excitation of the neural system, but has spatiotemporal co-ordinates that reach beyond the skull and skin right out to the object seen. The object is *in* the perceptual experience, for the token-externalist, in a spatiotemporal sense of 'in' rather than in the logical sense appealed to by the notions of object-dependent representation and identity and individuation criteria.<sup>6</sup> This conception of experience, that is, is the conception of an event that is intentional in the sense of the term shared by Brentano, Husserl, and Sartre. It is a conception of perceptual experience as intuition or *connaissance* of an object, as acquaintance with or apprehension of an object not represented but present 'in person' in experience (see 1.1).

We have already considered the form of token-externalism that affirms the generative theory, according to which a perceptual visual experience is a direct mental relation to the seen object which is independent of but brought about by the causal relation between object and brain, and found it to be incompatible with the results of experiments involving displacing glasses. As token-externalism cannot appeal to a mental relation independent of the causal relation, then, it must identify the perceptual experience with that causal chain.<sup>7</sup> What is required to block the causal argument, that is, is a form of token-externalism that denies the generative theory. What is required, in other words, is the strong disjunctivist construal of a perceptual experience as a relational event identical with the causal chain of events linking the seen object with the brain.

As we saw in 3.2, Sartre's form of disjunctivism should be construed as a form of strong disjunctivism. His opposition to the generative theory of perceptual

experience (B&N: 314-5), presented above as a way of resisting the second form of the argument from hallucination we considered (3.1), may in fact have been motivated by the considerations involved in the causal argument. The difference between the common forms of the argument from hallucination and the causal argument is that the former are concerned with types of experience and their relations to other types of event, whereas the latter is concerned with the occurrences of token experiences. Sartre does not consider causal or other principles linking types of events in his discussion of the generative theory, and recommends that we do not approach philosophical questions in terms of types or kinds of event, in abstract terms, but rather in terms of token or concrete events (see B&N: 3-4). But whatever the root of Sartre's opposition to the generative theory, it provides him with the only way of resisting both the second form of the argument from hallucination we considered and the causal argument, a strong disjunctivism that identifies perceptual experiences with the causal chains of events linking perceived objects to brains (although Sartre does not put it this way) rather than construing them as events at the ends of such chains.

It might be objected that this identification of a conscious experience with a causal chain of events is unavailable to Sartre due to his distinction between being and nothingness: since nothingness is the absence of being, the objection might run, Sartre's characterisation of consciousness as nothingness (e.g. B&N: 28) is incompatible with the claim that episodes of phenomenal consciousness are identical with causal sequences of events involving beings; nothingness is distinct from being in-itself, and so an event of consciousness cannot be identical with a region of being in-itself. But this objection trades on a dualistic reading of Sartre's ontology that construes being and nothingness as a pair of mutually exclusive regions of reality (see e.g. McCann 1993, 112). I argue in chapter 4 that this dualistic reading runs counter to the spirit of Sartre's work, particularly to the hope expressed in the opening paragraph of *Being and Nothingness* for an ontology free of embarrassing dualisms (see 2.2), and that Sartre's ontology is best construed

as form of nonreductionist monism. Sartre's ontology is, I argue, derived from Husserl's discussion of mereological relations in *Logical Investigations*. This ontology allows Sartre to construe a perceptual experience as an event whose proper parts are the events in the causal chain linking object and brain. Sartre's talk of the nothingness of consciousness, on this reading, is meant to highlight the fact that the conscious properties of this higher-level event are not themselves beings, entities that could continue to exist even if they were not parts of the higher-level event, but are what Husserl calls 'dependent parts' of the higher-level event. On this reading, defended in chapter 4, then, Sartre's talk of the nothingness of consciousness is compatible with my claim that he identifies perceptual experiences with causal chains of events.

The remainder of this chapter is concerned with the motivation for the common acceptance of the generative theory based on the role of experiences in explaining behaviour. Since the behaviour that is explained by a perceptual experience could in principle have occurred as a result of hallucination, the thought runs, it seems that the experience that explains the behaviour is independent of the existence of the object perceived and must be generated within the body of the perceiver. In 3.4, I argue that this motivation for the generative theory can be resisted only by denying, as Sartre does, that hallucination does not involve apprehension of a part of mind-independent reality, and in 3.5 I explain Sartre's account of the relation between the object of apprehension and the intentional object in an hallucination or dream, an account which I claim allows him to distinguish perception from hallucination without denying that hallucination involves apprehension of mind-independent reality.

### **3.4 Hallucination and Apprehension**

So far in this chapter, the primary concern has been forms of the argument from hallucination that are concerned with the relation between experience

and the causal chain linking object to brain. In this section, we are concerned with arguments from hallucination concerned with the behavioural effects of experience. The problem arises from comparing seeing and drinking water, for example, with hallucinating the presence of water and behaving as though there were water present. If the states of or events within the hallucinating subject's body are sufficient to cause a certain kind of bodily movement, the objection runs, then these states or events are sufficient to cause the perceiving subject to perform those bodily movements. The fact that 'in hallucination the external object is dispensed with altogether' (Price 1932, 30), the objection runs, shows that the same bodily movements as may result from perception may also occur when no part of the material environment is apprehended. So the experiences that explain these bodily movements, it seems, do not include any part of the material environment. This thought may underlie the common claim that since hallucinatory experiences are generated by neural activity, perceptual experiences must also be (e.g. Broad 1952, 10; Robinson 1994, 152-8; Coates 1998, 26). The experience generated by neural activity, on this view, is sufficient to explain the resulting bodily movements regardless of context, so perceptual experiences that explain successful action are also generated by neural activity and hence do not involve parts of the physical environment.

Resisting this argument requires an account of hallucinatory experience that shows how an hallucination may result in the same bodily movements as its matching perception without undermining the claim that a perceptual experience includes an object that is simply not present in its matching hallucination. This point may underlie Sturgeon's complaint that disjunctivism fails to explain the similarity between a perceptual experience and its matching hallucination because it fails to provide an account of the nature of hallucination (1998, 182-6). Taken as an attack on weak disjunctivism, Sturgeon's point fails to understand the nature of its target: as we saw in 3.2, the weak disjunctivist agrees that a certain type of neural stimulation will result in it seeming to the subject as if, for example, a bus is coming, but must deny

that this seeming has a basic explanatory role in understanding one's mental economy. The weak disjunctivist must assign a fundamental explanatory role to perceptual experiences, and define hallucinatory ones purely in terms of their indistinguishability from perceptual ones. Weak disjunctivism is unsatisfactory, though, because it precludes explanation of why one kind of experience occurs rather than another on any given occasion (see 3.3). As an attack on strong disjunctivism, however, Sturgeon's point is correct: strong disjunctivists must deny the claim that since an hallucinatory experience can result in the same bodily movements as a matching perceptual experience but in the absence of the object required for perception, perceptual experiences are independent of their objects and can occur as hallucinatory experiences; and in order to deny this claim it is necessary to give an account of hallucinatory experience that shows how it can result in the same bodily movements as a matching perceptual experience without undermining the claim that perceptual experience literally (spatio-temporally) includes its object.<sup>8</sup>

The problem, moreover, cannot be evaded simply by denying that hallucinations are experienced. Such a refusal might be based on Malcolm's denial that dreams are experienced, or on Dennett's sceptical claim that dreams might not be experienced. Malcolm claims that to say 'I dreamt so and so' is to say just that it seemed to me on waking as though 'so and so' had occurred, and that 'so and so' did not occur (1959, 66). This second criterion, though, is not necessary for dreaming: 'a well-known Duke of Devonshire ... once dreamt that he was speaking in the House of Lords and, when he woke up, found that he *was* speaking in the House of Lords' (Moore 1959, 241). The central point to be taken from Malcolm is that there might not be any experiences had while asleep. It might rather be that it merely seems to the awakened person as though they had undergone certain experiences.<sup>9</sup> This point is taken up by Dennett, who argues that all the empirical data we have concerning dreams is as compatible with the Malcolmian view that 'it is not like anything to dream, although it is like something *to have dreamed*'

(Dennett 1976, 161) as it is with the ‘received view’ of dreams as experiences had while asleep. As a result, no empirical data can decide the issue, so it is ‘an *open* and *theoretical* question whether dreams fall inside or outside the boundary of experience’ (1976, 170-1).

Adopting this, it might be argued that an hallucination is not an experience, but is an event or state that leaves memories that make it seem as if there had been an experience. The problem with this construal of hallucinations as a defence of strong disjunctivism arises from the relation between such hallucinations and the behaviour or bodily movements exhibited by the subject while the hallucination is taking place. There are two options. First, the movements could be construed as meaningless motor activity rather than full-blown action, perhaps spasms and / or reflex actions in response to environmental stimuli, and the memory traces that make it seem as though there had been experience are attempts to make sense of these movements. In this case, the hallucination would not cause the movement, so the claim that the same movements explained by a perceptual experience can be explained by an hallucinatory one would be false. The problem with this construal of the behaviour of the hallucinator is that the behaviour exhibited during hallucination can include speech behaviour, and it is implausible to suggest that seeming coherent sentences are in fact nothing but spasms of the speech box, however irrelevant those sentences are to the actual (externally observable) situation of the hallucinator. So the speech behaviour occurring during, and appropriate to the content of, an hallucination must be explained by reference to the hallucination itself, in which case it is difficult to see why this explanation should be restricted to the speech behaviour: if an hallucinatory experience can cause relevant speech behaviour, then there seems no reason why it should not cause other relevant behaviour.

This brings us to the second option: the behaviour is caused by whatever is going on in the hallucinator that also formulates the memories that make it seem as if there had been experience. But this option will not help the strong

disjunctivist to block the argument that whatever explains the hallucinator's behaviour also explains the perceiver's: if an hallucination is construed as an event that does not involve an experienced object and that issues in behaviour, then the opponent of strong disjunctivism can insist that this type of event is common to hallucination and perception and is the event that explains behaviour in both cases. Insisting that hallucination and perception differ in that the subject *experiences* perceptual experiences as they occur whereas hallucinatory events can only be remembered as though they had been experienced does not provide the strong disjunctivist with the required distinction: it merely renders the experiential aspects of experience epiphenomena, irrelevant to the behaviour that issues from experience, and then claims these epiphenomena to be present in only one case. What is crucial to the objection to strong disjunctivism we are here considering is the claim that the event that explains the perceiver's behaviour also explains the hallucinator's behaviour, and since it does not involve apprehension of a part of the world in the case of hallucination it does not involve apprehension of a part of the world in the case of perception. Faced with this account of hallucination as not being experienced, the opponent of strong disjunctivism can reply that if it is correct then the experiential aspects of experiences are not relevant to their explanatory role, but all experience remains object-independent nonetheless.

It is for this reason that a Sartrean response to the problem based on Sartre's distinction between the conceptual and nonconceptual aspects of experience (see 1.3) is not available. Such a response would argue that where perceptual experience is a matter of the conceptual or 'thetic' component of the experience tracking the nonconceptual, 'nonthetic', given aspects of the world confronted, an hallucinatory experience is one in which the thetic component is merely caused by bodily stimuli and itself causes the behaviour. The problem with this response is that it leaves open the claim that the account given of hallucination should in fact be applied to both cases: in perception, the thetic component is caused by appropriate stimuli and causes the

behaviour, whereas in hallucination the thetic experience that causes the behaviour is not appropriate to the stimuli. This serves to sharpen the point of the objection: what is crucial is the claim that in hallucination, behaviour is to be explained by reference to an experience that does not make reference to an object or part of the world that the experience is dependent on. Given this, and given that the same bodily movements can be manifested as a result of hallucinatory experience as can be manifested as a result of perceptual experience, it seems that the experience that explains the movements of the perceiver need make no reference to the object seen: it all could have happened in the absence of that object.

What is required to block this move is a more radical approach, one which challenges the traditional philosophical construal of hallucination as experience in the absence of any object. Although hallucinations occur in the absence of any *appropriate* object, so that the hallucinator may act as though confronted with a dragon when there is no dragon, this should not be taken as evidence that hallucinations can occur in the absence of *all* objects. We have no evidence, moreover, of disembodied and unenvironed experiences actually taking place, and neither could we have. The consideration of hallucination, that is, traditionally ‘urges us to admit that in the case of extreme hallucination there is no external object present at all’ (Dancy 1985, 169; see also Snowdon 1990, 128), but this is an urge which might be resisted. If an alternative account of hallucination can be given so that hallucinations do involve objects of direct apprehension, then the current objection to strong disjunctivism can be blocked. On such a construal of hallucination, it would not be true to say that when Fred hallucinates a glass of water and behaves as though there were a glass of water present, Fred’s behaviour must be explained by reference to an experience that does not involve an object. Of course, the object involved would not be a glass of water, for there is no glass of water present, but if there is some other object present then the explanation of the behaviour can refer to that object: the apprehension of that object as a

glass of water, or as indicating one, explains why Fred behaved as though there were a glass of water.

This is exactly the move Sartre makes in *The Psychology of Imagination*. Visual hallucinations and dreams are, according to Sartre, the imaginative apprehension of entoptic lights or phosphenes within the eyes themselves, photons that have penetrated the semi-permeable eyelids. These entoptic spots are not objects of visual attention, and neither can they be: visual attention requires a physiological orientation to the object and 'since entoptic lights are *in* the eyes, it is not possible for the eyeballs to assume a position in relation to them' (PI: 51; see 49). Instead, the subject attempts to focus on the object of visual apprehension, and this attempt to focus involves rapid movement of the eyes, just as in perception. But since the lights move with the eyes, '[t]hese movements give rise to indefinite and indefinable phosphorescent crossings. Then, all of a sudden, there appear forms with clear contours' (PI: 51). These forms are then apprehended as something other than themselves: 'Nothing new has appeared, no image is projected on the entoptic lights, but, in apprehending them, they are apprehended as the teeth of a saw' (PI: 52). The apprehension of the entoptic spots as other than they are is similar to seeing visions a crystal ball. In both cases, there are only vague and shifting shapes, so there is no definite object on which the eye can focus, but the eye movements made to attempt to track these movements help to give rise to shapes and patterns which, in a subject favourably inclined, may be apprehended as something they are not (PI: 56-7). Sartre's emphasis on entoptic lights in *The Psychology of Imagination* is replaced in *Being and Nothingness* by reference to patterns on the inside of the eyelids caused by the penetration of some light. '[T]he eyelid, in fact, is merely one object perceived among other objects', he writes. 'No longer to see the objects in my room because I have closed my eyes is to see the curtain of my eyelids' (B&N: 319). The precise physiology of this apprehension is unimportant for present purposes, however. All that matters is that

hallucination and dreaming may involve apprehension of disturbances in the visual system, and hence apprehension of part of mind-independent reality.

Hallucination and dream are forms of imaginative awareness for Sartre and, as we saw in 1.1, the characteristic of imaginative awareness is that the object of apprehension is not the same as the intentional object, the object of attention, the posited object. I can look at a photograph of Peter as a piece of card covered in coloured shapes, in which case I am perceiving the object of apprehension and that object is the intentional object posited and attended to. Or I can apprehend it as an image of Peter, in which case I am imagining Peter and *he* is the intentional object posited and attended to (PI: 17-8). In hallucinations and dreams, disturbances in the visual system are surpassed in just the way that the photograph is surpassed when it is taken as an image of Peter: although they are the objects present in experience, the objects of visual apprehension, they are not the intentional objects, the objects posited, the objects of attention. So when Fred hallucinates a glass of water, he is apprehending an object (e.g. entoptic lights) but is surpassing this object of apprehension and positing a glass of water. The fact that this intentional object does not correspond to anything in Fred's immediate environment does not entail that Fred's experience does not include a part of the world as an object of apprehension: it *does* include an object of apprehension even though this object does not match, or even closely resemble, the intentional object. As Sartre puts it: 'in the hallucination, in the dream, nothing can destroy the unreality of the [intentional] object as image as an immediate correlative of the imaginative consciousness' (PI: 175-6), even though this imaginative consciousness is founded on apprehension of a part of reality.

Sartre's clearest exposition of his distinction between the role played by the object of apprehension in hallucination and dreams, on the one hand, and the role it plays in perception, on the other, is in terms of an auditory example:

'the noise of the alarm clock is at first experienced as an analogue of the noise of a fountain, the ringing of bells, the rolling of a drum, etc. But if we wake up we pass precisely to the perception of the noise of daytime. This does not mean that we make judgements like: "this is the striking of an alarm clock", it only means that we suddenly apprehend the striking for what it is (that is, a succession of shrill and vibrant sounds) and for nothing else than itself. It matters little whether we do or do not realize later the origin and cause of the noise: I can be aroused by a noise of whose true cause I am still ignorant.' (PI: 192)

The key difference between the auditory component of a dream and the visual component is that we close our eyes to sleep but we do not close our ears: objects beyond the body may be objects of auditory apprehension in dreams, but objects of visual apprehension cannot lie beyond the eyelids. The noise of the alarm clock does not disappear when I awake, but entoptic lights do disappear when I focus on the world around me. But the basic point remains the same: in hallucinations and dreams, the object of apprehension is experienced as an 'analogue' (*analogon*) of something else (the intentional object of the experience), just as a photograph of Peter may be apprehended imaginatively as an analogue of Peter, whereas in perception it is apprehended as itself, just as a photograph of Peter may be apprehended as a piece of card covered in coloured shapes.

Sartre, then, presents an alternative to the traditional philosophical conception of hallucination as experience in the absence of any object, arguing that although it is experience in the absence of its intentional object it involves an object of apprehension nonetheless. This move blocks the objection to strong disjunctivism based on behaviour resulting from hallucination. That objection claimed that Fred's perceptual experience of a glass of water required to explain his action of drinking the water does not include the glass of water as an object of apprehension since in the case of hallucination the same bodily

movements are to be explained by an experience that does not include a part of the world as an object of apprehension. The hallucination, according to Sartre, merely involves a *different* part of the world as object of apprehension. When Fred hallucinates or dreams water, his behaviour is to be explained by reference to his ‘imaginative apprehension of phosphenes [entoptic lights]’ (PI: 191), or other disturbances in the visual system, rather than perceptual apprehension of a glass of water. The hallucinator’s behaviour is inappropriate to the actual nature of the object of apprehension, since it is appropriate to the nature of the intentional object which is not the object of apprehension, but there is such an object nonetheless, and this object is not apprehended in the perceptual case.

Perceptual experience, on Sartre’s account, involves the object of apprehension being the intentional object, and this involves the ‘thetic’ (conceptual) component of the experience tracking (or, at least, attempting to track) the manifest qualities of the object of acquaintance (see 1.3). Hallucinatory experiences, on the other hand, do not: they involve the positing of an intentional object other than the object of apprehension, although as with the case of the photograph of Peter the thetic component of this experience may be cued to some extent by the manifest qualities of the object of apprehension. So far, however, this is only a rather schematic account of this form of disjunctivism. It lacks an account of *how* the intentional object of an experience may be distinct from the object of apprehension, of *what it means* to say that in imaginative experiences such as hallucinations and dreams the object of apprehension is treated as an ‘analogue’ and is surpassed towards some other thing which is not present yet is the kind of thing to which the ensuing behaviour is appropriate. The next section is concerned with Sartre’s answer to these questions.

### 3.5 Sartrean Disjunctivism

Sartre's account of hallucination and dreaming is part of his overall account of imaginative experience, and his disjunctivism is thereby a disjunctivism of perception on the one hand and all imaginative experience on the other. The details of this disjunctivism are outlined in the opening pages of *The Psychology of Imagination*, where he provides four 'characteristics' of imaginative experience. Two of these characteristics are common to perceptual experience within his theory, however, and so are unimportant for the present purpose of distinguishing perceptual from hallucinatory experience. These two characteristics are that 'images' are experiences rather than objects of experience (PI: 2-5; see IPC: 146), and that such experiences always involve nonthetic awareness of the act of awareness as well as thetic awareness of the intentional object (PI: 13-14). The acceptability of Sartre's theory of pre-reflective self-awareness, which is expressed in this latter characteristic of imagination, is unimportant for present purposes.

The remaining two characteristics, however, present a problem for present purposes: we only need one. Drawing a distinction within the class of experiences between those that are and those that are not perceptual, that is, should involve only one criterion which divides the one type from the other. Sartre's claim that he is attempting to 'determine and classify [the] distinctive characteristics' of imaginary experiences (PI: 2) may make it seem as though he is not attempting to draw a rigid line between perceptual and imaginative experience, but rather attempting to understand the concept of imagination as a family resemblance concept by ascertaining the characteristics of 'the image family' (see PI: 16). If this were the case, then it would be a mistake to attempt to derive a disjunctive account of experience from this work, since the work would not be attempting to distinguish imaginative from perceptual experiences. But this reads too much into Sartre's use of the term 'characteristics': he also claims to be attempting to ascertain 'the essence of the image' (PI: 1), writes throughout the work of 'essential' characteristics

(e.g. PI: 16, 61), and claims that phenomenology ‘is an eidetic science’, a science of essences (PI: 187), which along with the work’s leitmotif that all experiences are *either* perceptual *or* imaginative strongly suggests that he is attempting to provide a sharp distinction between the two kinds of experience (see also PI: 11). So in order to formulate Sartrean disjunctivism as an account of the distinction between perceptual and hallucinatory experience, it is necessary *either* to choose between the two ‘distinctive characteristics’ that Sartre proposes *or* to show that at least one is the necessary corollary of the other so that the two characteristics can both be accepted as different aspects of the same essential trait, although one may be basic and the other derived from it. This section is concerned with examining each of the two characteristics in turn in order to decide how Sartrean disjunctivism is best formulated.

The first distinguishing characteristic of imaginative experiences that Sartre proposes is ‘quasi-observation’ (PI: 5-10). Imaginative experiences share with perceptual ones the trait of presenting the intentional object in profile rather than all at once: if I imagine the Eiffel Tower, I must imagine it as it would be seen from some particular angle, whereas if I just think of it then I need not think of it as seen from anywhere in particular. To this extent, imagination seems like a form of observation. But the intentional object of my imaginative experience as I imagine it does not have aspects that are hidden from me or that I may learn about from inspecting it, whereas the intentional object of my perceptual experience as I experience it does have aspects that are hidden from view. When I see a tomato, for example, I only see it from a certain angle and presume that it really is a tomato, that it has a farside and an inside, and may later find out that it was in fact only a part of the outside of a tomato turned towards me at a certain angle. When I imagine a tomato, on the other hand, it is certain that it is a tomato that I imagine. I cannot, moreover, discover anything about the imagined tomato by turning it around in my mind: if the farside turns out to be green rather than red, this is because I make it that way, not because it was already that way. As Sartre puts it:

'the object of the perception overflows consciousness constantly; the object of the image is never more than the consciousness one has of it; it is limited by that consciousness: nothing can be learned from the image that is not already known ... it reveals immediately what it is' (PI: 8).

In perceptual experience, 'judgement corrects, organises, and stabilizes perception' (PI: 44): the thetic component of the experience tracks the manifest qualities of the object, and may misconstrue these qualities and so misrepresent the object. In imaginative experience, on the other hand, the object is *specified* by the thetic component of the experience; it is 'contemporaneous with the consciousness I have of it, and it is determined exactly by that consciousness: it includes nothing in itself but what I am conscious of; but, inversely, everything that constitutes my consciousness has its counterpart in the object' (PI: 9-10). The thetic component of the experience cannot misrepresent the nature of the intentional object, nor fail to capture the whole nature of it, since the nature of the intentional object is whatever the thetic component of the experience construes it as. 'A hare vaguely perceived is nevertheless a specific hare. But a hare which is the object of a vague image is a vague hare' (PI: 15). It might be objected to this that it is a common enough experience to imagine a certain person when trying to remember whether or not that person wears glasses, for example, but in such a case the image constructed of that person will either be indeterminate with respect to the presence or absence of eyewear or will simply be a method of recalling whether or not that person wears glasses: the feat could not be performed by someone who had never met that person nor read or heard a description of them.

Sartre claims that this characteristic is true of all imaginative experience. If I hallucinate or dream a dragon, as opposed to simply imagining one, then still that dragon has neither a back nor an underside, nor a past or a future, nor a

name, nor any other characteristic that I am unaware of (PI: 42-5, 179-80, 198). In the case of the deliberate use of mental imagery, such as imagining someone's face, the knowledge that specifies the object is 'knowledge' in a fairly straightforward sense: my previous experience furnishes the details. In the case of hallucinations and dreams, however, the intentional object may be quite novel. Imaginative experiences based on the patterns formed by entoptic spots during rapid eye movement, Sartre claims, involves 'knowledge' (*savoir*) based on feedback from the motor system. 'It is not because the unreal object appears close to me that my eyes are going to converge, but it is the convergence of my eyes that mimics the proximity of the object', he writes (PI: 157). He takes this to be equivalent to the claim that 'the entire body participates in the make-up of the image' (PI: 157), an aspect of his account of experience that Morris (1975) and Wider (1997) emphasise in claiming that he takes the body rather than the brain or the visual system to be the subject of experience, but the point need not entail this claim. It might rather be that the motor feedback from such bodily movements as the convergence of the eyes has effects on the neural system which thereby effect the experience without the bodily movements themselves being included within the experience. Whether or not 'the entire body participates in the make-up of the image', however, is unimportant for present purposes. The key point is that Sartre's emphasis on 'knowledge' as constituting the structure of the imagined object in hallucination and dream is not equivalent to the obviously false claim that we can only hallucinate or dream objects that we have previously perceived or had described to us: some of the 'knowledge' may be constituted or caused by bodily movement.

The characteristic of quasi-observation, then, is the characteristic that the intentional object of imaginative experience is not independent of the experience and tracked by the thetic component of it, but rather the thetic component ('knowledge') is derived from other sources and specifies the object.

The second distinguishing characteristic of imaginative experience that Sartre proposes concerns the way in which the experience posits its object. Perceptual experience, he claims, ‘posit its object as existing’, whereas imaginative experience ‘can posit the object as non-existent, or as absent, or as existing elsewhere; it can also “neutralize” itself, that is, not posit its object as existing’ (PI: 11-12). This last form of positing, he adds in a footnote, ‘remains a positional act’ it is equivalent to merely entertaining the possibility of the existence of the object without commitment to its actual existence or non-existence, presence or absence (PI: 12 n).<sup>10</sup> The intentional object of imaginative experience, that is, is not constituted with the characteristic of being a present existing thing. Rather, the intentional object of the image is specified by the thetic component of the experience, and hence presented, as not being a present existent to which attention is being paid: ‘we can pretend for a second but we cannot destroy the immediate awareness of its nothingness’ (PI: 13).

This claim seems obviously false when applied to hallucinations and dreams. Many philosophers oppose the claim that perceptual experience is apprehension of mind-independent reality precisely because an hallucination may seem to the subject as though it is a perception, and the subject may behave as though it is a perception (see 3.1 and 3.4). Some hallucinations and dreams, that is, seem to involve positing the intentional object as both existent and present. Sartre’s inclusion of this characteristic as part of the nature of imaginative consciousness is a result of his project of attempting to provide a single unified account of nonperceptual experience under the general heading of ‘imagination’, and so including in this account the deliberate use of mental imagery (IPC: 108; PI: 57-61) and the ‘willing suspension of disbelief’ involved in watching an actor or an impressionist (PI: 26-31) and in reading fiction (PI: 70-4, 197). In all these cases, it is plausible to say that the intentional object is presented as unreal or not present, but this does not seem so plausible in the case of hallucinations and dreams.

Sartre maintains, however, that this characteristic applies equally to hallucinations and dreams as to other forms of imagination. Hallucinations and dreams do not, he tells us, involve mistaking the images based on entoptic lights for perceptions: 'This we pronounce as impossible *de facto*.' (PI: 192). It is rather that the attitude consciousness has towards the unreal objects it posits has changed (PI: 191). Sartre compares the images based on entoptic lights in hypnagogic dreaming (a state that precedes full-blown dreaming) with dreaming itself, and argues that the transition from one state to the other involves the images acquiring 'the characteristic of being *interesting*' (PI: 193). In more detail:

'the hypnagogic image was the sudden conviction into which consciousness suddenly dropped; I was suddenly persuaded that such and such an entoptic blot *was* a fish as an image. Now I am dreaming and this sudden belief becomes heavy and enriched: I am suddenly persuaded that this fish has a story, that he was caught in that river, that he will appear on the table of the archbishop, etc. River, fish, archbishop, are all imaginary but they constitute a world.' (PI: 196).

With the introduction of this narrative element, which may also be present in hallucination, consciousness becomes 'fascinated' (PI: 197), 'spellbound' (PI: 198), 'obsessive' (PI: 198), 'enchanted' (PI: 204); 'it cannot emerge from the imaginative attitude in which it has enclosed itself' (PI: 192); it is 'imprisoned in the imaginary' (PI: 193). The basic claim is that consciousness becomes reorientated with respect to the imaginary reality it is positing as imaginary or unreal. The 'me' that might appear in the dream, and the bodily movements I make as this 'me' reacts to situations in the dream, is 'an imaginary me' (PI: 200), an 'object-me' (PI: 202), whose behaviour I control partly by my movements since the content of the dream is partly constituted by my bodily movements. My mode of being becomes 'being-in-the-unreal-world' (PI: 202). Sartre argues, that is, that his claim that imagination never posits its objects

as existent and present is compatible with the behaviour and later reports of hallucinating or dreaming subjects because in such a situation the subject posits objects as unreal but enters into a kind of play-acting engagement with the unreal (Pl: 171-206). A dream, he summarises,

‘is primarily a *story* and our strong interest in it is of the same sort as that of the naïve reader in a novel. ... Only it is a “spell-binding” fiction ... Just as King Midas turned everything he touched into gold, so consciousness is itself determined to transform into the imaginary everything it gets hold of. ... The dream is not fiction taken for reality, it is the *Odyssey* of a consciousness dedicated by itself, and in spite of itself, to build only an unreal world’ (Pl: 205-6)

The second characteristic of imaginative experience, then, is that it never posits its intentional object as existent and present, but always posits it as non-existent, absent, existing elsewhere, or remains neutral on this issue. It does not posit its object as a present being, that is, but ‘as a nothingness’ (Pl: 10). Cases that may seem to require construing the imaginative experience as positing a real and present object are rather to be construed as involving a reorientation of consciousness towards the unreal, as consciousness entering into a kind of make-believe.

The acceptability of this second characteristic, however, is unimportant for the purposes of providing a criterion for distinguishing perceptual from hallucinatory or dream experience, since it would be inadequate for the task without appeal to the first characteristic, that of quasi-observation, and the first characteristic does not entail or presuppose the second. The first characteristic, that is, is the characteristic that the nature of the intentional object is stipulated by consciousness rather than being an attempt to track some pre-existing nature, and the second is that the set of determinations of the intentional object, the specification provided by the thetic component of

the experience, does not include the determination of being a real and present entity. There is no a priori reason why a consciousness that specifies its intentional object should be limited in this way: there seems no reason why the determination of being a present real entity should not be among the determinations specified by consciousness. So the characteristic of quasi-observation does not require the characteristic of positing as a nothingness.

The characteristic of positing as a nothingness, moreover, cannot provide the sole criterion for distinguishing perceptual from hallucinatory or dreamed experience, since without the characteristic of quasi-observation this characteristic would claim that hallucinatory and dreamed experiences involve determinations that attempt to track the manifest qualities of an object of apprehension, as in perceptual experience, even though the experience does not posit this object as real. It is difficult to understand how an experience could involve tracking the qualities of a present real object of apprehension without taking that object to be present and real, which is why Sartre claims that the second characteristic of imaginative experience 'can occur only on the level of *quasi-observation*' (PI: 12). In addition to this, there is the further problem of understanding quite what entity consciousness is supposed to be tracking when, for example, someone hallucinates a dragon. The entity is obviously not a dragon, and since there need not be any entity in the hallucinator's immediate vicinity that even remotely resembles a dragon, it cannot be an ordinary object in the hallucinator's vicinity. The entity would then have to be some kind of private entity, such as a sense datum. Sartre of course would not countenance introducing such entities since he would consider it a return to 'the illusion of immanence', the picture of consciousness as 'a place peopled by small likenesses' (PI: 2), whereas he considers consciousness to be a 'nothingness' (e.g. B&N: 28): 'If, impossible though it be, you could enter "into" a consciousness you would be seized by a whirlwind and thrown back outside, in the thick of the dust, near the tree, for consciousness has no "inside"' (1939, 4-5). But aside from Sartre's own opposition to sense data and their kin, no disjunctivist should construe

hallucination as observation of private entities where perception is observation of public ones, since '[i]t is not as if sense-data are there anyway, waiting for the subject to alight on' (Martin 1997, 96). Bringing about the hallucination of a dragon is sufficient to bring about the intentional object of that experience, the intended dragon, whereas the perception of a dragon would require the existence of a dragon. In hallucination, unlike perception, there is no logically prior object for the experience to track.

Of the two characteristics of imaginative as opposed to perceptual experience that Sartre provides, then, the second taken alone is inadequate to provide a criterion for distinguishing hallucinatory from perceptual experience, and the first neither entails nor presupposes the second. The first characteristic, that of quasi-observation, then, should be taken as the criterion of distinguishing hallucinatory from perceptual experience, the criterion of Sartrean disjunctivism. The second characteristic should be taken as a contingent claim about all the experiences delimited as a class by the first criterion, a claim which may be of interest in other areas of the philosophy and psychology of consciousness or imagination but which is irrelevant to the present task of delimiting the class of non-perceptual experiences.

Sartrean disjunctivism, then, refuses to accept the traditional claim that hallucinatory experience does not involve apprehension of a part of mind-independent reality, and instead distinguishes between perceptual and hallucinatory experience in terms of the role played by the object of apprehension in each. In perception, the object of apprehension is also the intentional object: the thetic component of the experience attempts to track the manifest qualities of the object, and so attempts to take it for what it is. In hallucination, on the other hand, the intentional object is distinct from the object of apprehension, the dreamed dragon is not the entoptic patterns formed during REM sleep that serve as the object of acquaintance and as the 'analogue' of the dragon. In hallucinations and dreams, that is, the intentional object is stipulated or specified by consciousness on the basis of the

character of the patterns or shapes that serve as the ‘material’ for the experience (PI: 17-18 and throughout). To serve as ‘material’ or ‘analogue’ is to be shaped or patterned in a way that suggests to the subject of experience a certain thing or type of thing, be it the subject’s friend Peter or something in general like a fish or a dragon, and on the basis of this suggestion, perhaps also with bodily movements or motor feedback from them, the subject formulates the structure of the intentional object. A visual hallucination or dream ‘is a synthetic act which unites a concrete, non-imagined, knowledge (*savoir*) to elements which are more actually representative’ (PI: 7).

The material or analogue is not itself observed as in perception, it is not ‘contemplated’ (PI: 49), which would require the thetic component of the experience to be concerned only with tracking its qualities. Instead, it forms the intuitive basis for the ‘quasi-observed’ intentional object. Quasi-observation involves the intentional object being experienced ‘in profile’, as it would be seen from an angle, rather than being thought of with all its aspects at once as when an object is conceived, as well as having its determinations stipulated by consciousness (PI: 6-7). This experiencing ‘in profile’ is a result of the intuitive basis of the experience being the shapes or patterns apprehended: these shapes or patterns form the shape of the intentional object as experienced. To serve as the intuitive basis, the material or analogue, for an hallucination or dream, then, is to be experienced as the intentional object where the ‘experiencing as’ is a result of consciousness not attempting to track the manifest qualities of the material but projecting prior ‘knowledge’ (*savoir*) as characteristics of the intended object suggested by the intuited material. These characteristics may be wildly inappropriate: ‘A coach appeared before me which was the categorical imperative’ (PI: 50). Sartre’s further claim that in hallucination and dreams consciousness cannot help but apprehend entities as analogues of other things, cannot escape the attitude of quasi-observation, is part of his theory of imaginative experience not positing its objects as present, which as we have seen is unimportant for present purposes. Rather than claiming that consciousness *cannot* observe the

analogue for what it is, we need only claim that in hallucination and dreams consciousness *does not* observe the material for what it is: the coach which is the categorical imperative would disappear if the subject were to observe the entoptic lights as entoptic lights (see PI: 51).

### 3.6 Conclusions

In this chapter, then, we have seen that Sartre provides a strong disjunctivist account of experience which is immune to arguments from hallucination against his view that perceptual experience consists in apprehension of mind-independent reality. Sartre's strong disjunctivism does not have weak disjunctivism's flaw of precluding the possibility of explaining why a perceptual rather than hallucinatory experience occurred on a specific occasion. Sartrean disjunctivism, then, is explanatorily superior to the weak forms of disjunctivism prevalent in current anglophone philosophy. A perceptual experience, on Sartre's strong disjunctivist view, includes the perceived part of the world not just logically but spatiotemporally: the experience itself goes right out the object. This helps to clarify Sartre's notion of intentionality: an intentional event or state includes an object in that the object is partly constitutive of that event or state.

Sartre's construal of intentional events and states as literally (spatiotemporally) containing objects, however, should not be taken as the claim that they literally (spatiotemporally) include their intentional objects. They include objects of acquaintance or apprehension, on his account, but these objects are identified with intentional objects only in cases of perceptual experience: in imaginative experience the intentional object is distinct from the object of apprehension. Sartre's classification of dreams and hallucinations as imaginative experiences, hence as experiences involving an object of apprehension which is surpassed towards an imagined intentional object, allows him to evade objections to his strong disjunctivism that claim that the

kind of experience involved in a perception may also occur as an hallucination but in the absence of any object. In this way, Sartre bucks the philosophical trend of construing hallucinations and dreams as involving no objects of apprehension, claiming instead that they do not involve objects of apprehension as intentional objects. Denying the claim that hallucination does not involve an object of apprehension is required for upholding strong disjunctivism, which if the argument of 3.3 is right means that denying this claim is necessary for upholding the conception of perceptual experience as apprehension of part of mind-independent reality. By denying it in favour of the weak claim that hallucination does not involve an object of apprehension as intentional object, Sartre effectively points up the fact that the stronger claim is unwarranted.

Claiming that hallucination involves an object of acquaintance that plays a different role to that of its counterpart in perception requires drawing a distinction between the two kinds of experience in terms of the structures of consciousness involved, in terms of the way in which the object of apprehension is apprehended. Sartre provides, as we have seen, two candidate criteria for this task, but the only one that is adequate to the task is the claim that perception is ‘observation’, tracking the manifest qualities of the object of acquaintance, whereas imaginative experience is ‘quasi-observation’, stipulating the nature of the intentional object on the basis of cues provided by the object of apprehension, and perhaps coenaesthetic awareness of bodily movements. The other criterion Sartre provides, that perception involves positing the object as existent and present whereas imaginative experience does not, is a major plank of his work on imagination and may be of interest to other areas of philosophy and psychology, but since it cannot be the criterion for distinguishing perceptual from hallucinatory experiences and it is not entailed by the first candidate criterion, it forms no essential part of Sartrean disjunctivism.

The investigation of the first criterion has clarified the relation between Sartre's two terms translated as 'knowledge': *connaissance* is the apprehension or intuition of something, or acquaintance with it; *savoir* is the understanding involved in structuring experience, which may attempt to track the object of *connaissance* or may stipulate another intentional object on the basis of cues provided by the object of *connaissance*. In the terminology discussed in chapter 1, the object of *connaissance* manifests qualities of which the subject is nonthetically aware, and the thetic component of the experience is provided by *savoir* that either tracks or is simply cued by these qualities. This criterion, and the relation between thetic and nonthetic components of experience on which it is based, also preserves the philosophical distinction between illusion and hallucination. The dehydrated desert traveller who mistakes the hazy air above distant hot sand for water, for example, or the person who mistakes a distant tree for a person, is perceiving rather than hallucinating: the thetic component of the experience attempts and fails to track the manifest qualities of experience, mistakenly seeing the haze as water or the branches and trunk as arms and torso. This failure to track qualities is a feature of illusion but not hallucination: 'My perception can deceive me, but not my image' (PI: 9).

The reference to objects of apprehension in hallucinations and dreams at the heart of this disjunctivism, finally, allows Sartre to show how these phenomena pose no threat to his central claim that: 'Nothing of what I see comes from me; there is *nothing* outside what I see or what I could see. ... *representation*, as a psychic event, is a pure invention of philosophers' (B&N: 217)

## Chapter 4

# Holism: Science and Ontology

Sartre, as we have seen, holds a relational view of phenomenal consciousness as direct apprehension of an object or part of the world that is not dependent for its existence on that apprehension. This view, which I have also called 'strong disjunctivism', denies that experience is generated by stimulation of the neural system, claiming instead that the experience is identical with the causal relation between brain and object apprehended (see 3.2). This relational view of experience, as we shall see (4.2), requires the Heideggerian view of the subject as an environmentally embedded embodied being, a 'being-in-the-world' whose actions as well as experiences involve both the body and its immediate environment, a view to which Sartre emphatically subscribes. These claims can be attacked on ontological grounds, particularly on the grounds of ontological claims purportedly grounded in science, and hence must be defended from these attacks. In this chapter, I present both the classical grounds for attack (4.1) and the contemporary naturalist grounds for attack (4.2), before going on to reconstruct the principles underlying Sartre's ontology of experience and of the subject from the discussions of ontology scattered throughout his early works (4.3). I argue that Sartre's ontology is immune to the contemporary

naturalist attacks and, moreover, that there is good philosophical reason to prefer Sartre's ontology to contemporary anglophone forms of naturalism (4.4). Finally, I argue that Sartre's ontology provides a new and innovative framework for a theory of colour that allows it to resist the classical attack on the view that experience is direct apprehension of part of mind-independent reality (4.5).

In the course of this, I argue that, despite Sartre's use of the terms 'being' and 'nothingness', it is wrong to claim of his ontology that:

'one could do no better than to call it a "dualist ontology", an ontology which, in this sense, moves against the spirit of Heideggerian ontology and harks back to Descartes' (McCann 1993, 112)

I argue that Sartre's ontology should rather be taken as a form of monism, and that such a monism is compatible with his central existentialist claim that the nothingness of consciousness is the source of human freedom. Sartre's self-professed Cartesianism, I claim, is not an assent to dualism but a retention of the Cartesian identification of freedom with the autonomy of consciousness within a monistic framework.

#### 4.1 Science and Colour

The claim that a perceptual experience is not contained within the head or body of the perceiver is classically challenged on the grounds that the part of the world perceived does not possess all the properties it is experienced as having. Since, for example, reality is not really coloured, the thought runs, a visual experience that presents a coloured object must be generated within the body of the perceiver, which is precisely what Sartre's position denies (see 3.2). Descartes, for example, argued that since 'nothing whatever

belongs to the concept of body except the fact that it is something which has length, breadth and depth and is capable of various shapes and motions', we must accept that 'colours, tastes, smells, and so on, are ... merely certain sensations which exist in my thought, and are as different from bodies as pain is different from the shape and motion of the weapon which produces it' (1984, 297). This distinction between primary qualities of shape and motion and secondary qualities of colour, taste, and smell was common to the Cartesian geometrical view of physics and the Newtonian corpuscularian, or atomist, view. The classical corpuscularian statement of the view is Locke's:

'The particular Bulk, Number, Figure, and Motion of the parts of Fire, or Snow, are really in them, whether anyone senses them or no: and therefore they may be called real Qualities, because they really exist in those Bodies. But ... let not the Eyes see Light, or Colours, nor the ears hear Sounds, let the Palate not Taste, nor the Nose Smell, and all Colours, Tastes, Odours, and Sounds, as they are such particular Ideas, vanish and cease, and are reduced to their causes, i.e. Bulk, Figure, and Motion of Parts' (1975, II.viii.17)

Although this is a general claim about phenomenal consciousness, I will restrict discussion of it to the case of colour in visual experience, for the sakes of simplicity and clarity, returning to the more general claim at the end (4.5). The Cartesian and Lockean point, then, is that phenomenal colours, colours as we experience them, form no part of the scientific accounts of reality, and so are no part of that reality. The basic scientific account of mind-independent reality operates only with the concepts of length, breadth, depth, shape, and motion, claim Descartes and Locke, and so phenomenal colours are no part of that reality. They are, rather, effects produced by neural stimulation. This point is not restricted to the Cartesian and Lockean views of basic science as dealing only with geometrical relations or the interaction of basic particles respectively. No form of basic science, whether it includes fields of force or

action at a distance, for example, includes reference to phenomenal colour in mapping out the nature of reality.

We can add to this point that phenomenal colours experienced are dependent on the structures of the subject's eyes. No mammals lower than primates, it seems, have colour vision, or if any do it is very rudimentary. The world looks very different to dogs than it does to us. Birds, fish, reptiles, and some insects, on the other hand, do have colour vision (Gregory 1998, 121). Bees, for example, have good colour vision, but the spectrum they see is shifted relative to the one we see. They cannot see red, but they can see from yellow all the way across the spectrum and beyond our limit of violet into ultra-violet. Ultra-violet photographs of flowers that ordinarily look white or yellow to us show them to be decorated with ultra-violet patterns, and these serve as markers that guide bees to the flowers' nectaries (Dawkins 1995, 99).

Colour perception in humans, moreover, depends on only three kinds of receptor in the eyes, three kinds of 'cones', each responding to a particular range of light wavelength. Cones are on-off switches, they either fire or do not, and so are insensitive to the differences between the wavelengths that switch them on and to the differences between those that switch them off. Quite different sets of light wavelengths can thereby have the same effect, resulting in the same colour experience, even in standard lighting conditions. Objects with quite different surfaces can therefore look to be the same colour. In addition to this, the colour a thing appears to be also depends to some extent on contextual features such as which other colours are being experienced, which other cones are firing, at the same time. A patch of red, for example, makes the adjacent area look greener than it would otherwise look (Hardin 1990, 558-60). Deficiency in the sensitivity of at least one type of cone, or the complete absence of at least one type of cone, is the usual cause of colour-blindness (Gregory 1998, 130).

In perceptual visual experience, then, we are aware of shaped expanses of colour. Our best theory of mind-independent reality does not refer to colours of objects, and so it seems that colours cannot be construed as properties of mind-independent reality. Campbell (1993, 263) suggests that we can construe colours as properties of objects nonetheless: they supervene on the microphysical structures of the surfaces of properties, and their explanatory role is to explain why things look a certain colour in ordinary light. An object that looks red in ordinary light, that is, looks that way because *it is red*. But colours construed in this way are not the same as the phenomenal colours of experience. The phenomenal colours of experience vary with the types and sensitivities of cones present in the eye, and with which other colours are being experienced at the same time, and Campbell's objective colours do not. Our perceptual visual experiences of coloured expanses, therefore, cannot be construed simply as apprehension of the surfaces of mind-independent objects. We need some other explanation of colour, and once this explanation has been given there may be no room left for Campbell's proposed explanatory role for objective colours: the phenomenal colours things seem to have in ordinary light may already have been accounted for. Moreover, since the experience of phenomenal colour is not simply apprehension of the surfaces of objects, it seems that they are generated within the skin, at some point after the firing of the optical cones.

Notice that this argument does not rest on the idea that if my experience seems to present a red object, then it must present a red object of some sort, such as an idea, impression, percept, sensation, sense-datum, or sensum. Although this presumption has been employed in forms of the argument (e.g. Russell 1912, 2-4), it is not crucial to it. All that matters is the claim that our awareness of colours cannot be construed as direct awareness of coloured parts of reality. Whether it is instead to be construed as awareness of coloured subjective entities, or as neural representations of aspects of mind-independent reality (e.g. Tye 1992), or as an association of sensory stimulation with previous sensory stimulations and other mental processes

associated with them (e.g. Dennett 1991, ch. 12), is beside the point. On any of these views, perceptual visual experience is generated by neural stimulation and hence Sartre's relational view of visual consciousness is false.

## 4.2 Explanation and Ontology

In addition to these classical grounds for attack on the related claims that an experience is not contained within the head or body, a further challenge is presented by the naturalistic approaches to ontology prevalent in contemporary anglophone philosophy. The challenge arises from the principle that ontology is dictated by best explanatory practice. In conjunction with the claim that the physical or natural sciences provide the best explanatory framework, this principle drives an argument for the reductionist conclusion that experiences, and other mental events, are to be identified with internal states of the brain or body caused by impacts on the organism from outside and causing behaviour. If this reductionism is right, then phenomenal consciousness cannot be understood as a relation between body or brain and object apprehended. In this section, I explain this reductionist challenge to Sartre's position in more detail. In the next section, I explain Sartre's ontology and the Husserlian principles underlying it, and in 4.4 I argue that Sartre's ontology is immune to the naturalistic arguments for reductionism and preferable to reductionism.

The claim that ontology is dictated by explanatory practice is the claim that all and only the objects, events, states, properties, tropes, or whatever, that are quantified over in our most simple and explanatorily and predictively powerful theory of the nature of the universe are to be admitted into the ontology of the universe. Any purported object, event, state, property, trope, or whatever, that is not included in this system of explanation must be *either* reducible to something or a set of things that is included in it *or* eliminated altogether.

There are at least two roots of this claim in twentieth century anglophone philosophy. One is an updating of Ockham's Razor, and is the claim that an idle wheel must be excised from an ontological system in the name of simplicity. Any irreducible postulate that 'has nothing to do, no purpose to serve ... might as well, and undoubtedly would in time, be abolished' (Alexander 1920, 8). This is the basis of the widespread rejection of epiphenomenalist theories of consciousness: since epiphenomena by definition have no explanatory role to play, they cannot be counted as part of reality (e.g. Kim 1998, 119). If something has no explanatory role to play, moreover, then there can be no evidence for its existence, for if there were then it would explain that evidence (Dennett 1991, 403-4). If our perceptual experiences, in particular, were epiphenomenal, then they could have no effect on us: they would make no difference to how we feel, think, or talk about our mental lives; everything would happen as if they did not exist, so again there could be no reason to believe that they do exist (Kirk 1999, § 3).

The other root of the claim that ontology is dictated by explanatory practice, owing to Quine, is to do with the nature of linguistic reference to objects. Quine argues that observation reports do not themselves require reference to entities, but are 'occasion sentences' made true by some portion of the visual scene. To report that there is a dog present, he claims, does not require picking out an object as such, but only recognising the distinctively doggy appearance of part of the visual scene. Reference to objects emerges by degrees, but is not complete until one needs to pick out the same stimulus of an occasion sentence, as when one says that 'of all the dogs, the one called "Fido" is the one that belongs to Mr Jones'. Individual objects are thus picked out by existential quantification, and types of objects by universal quantification (see Quine 1960, § 49). Quantified sentences are not observation sentences, but theoretical sentences aimed at predicting future experience in the light of past experience, and so individual objects and types of objects are just theoretical postulates. A theory that fails in some or all of its predictions is in need of improvement, and continual improvement will tend

towards an ideal theory that never fails. The values of the bound variables of this ideal theory, the entities and types of entities quantified over in the predictively adequate theory, will be all the entities there are. (For a complete statement of all this, see Quine 1981.) Thus, no entity can find its way into our ontology, or the future perfect ontology, without a role in the overall theory designed to predict future experiences in the light of past ones.

Given these motivations, it would be, to say the least, dogmatic and unconvincing to maintain that a certain entity or type of entity exists when it has no explanatory role to play. The demand that the relational experiences that Sartre postulates play an explanatory role, then, is not simply the claim that experiences explain behaviour (used in 3.4). Neither is it the strong and highly controversial claim that experiences are defined by their role in explaining behaviour (used by Lewis 1966, § III). It is the claim that unless relational experiences have a genuine explanatory role, they cannot be included as genuine events in our ontology and so must *either* be reduced to something that does have such a causal role or be eliminated altogether.

This does not present a problem for indirect realists, intentionalists, or weak disjunctivists, for they all agree that experiences are generated by neural stimulation (see 2.1 and 3.1) and so can happily reduce token experiences to token neural events or states. But there is no similar option open to Sartre. The relational view of experiences that identifies them with causal chains of events linking objects or states of affairs to brains, that is, must not be understood as the claim that experiences can be reduced to such causal chains. Since the effects of a token event are independent of its own causal aetiology (see 3.3), such a reduction would entail that had the token *neural* event or state involved in the experience been artificially stimulated in the absence of the object actually apprehended, it would have caused the same bodily movements (including the production of speech). This is precisely what adherents of the relational view of experience need to avoid: if there is an event in common between an actual perception and a counterfactual

hallucination which issues in all the behaviour appropriate to the experience, then that event must be counted as the experience. Reducing the experience, then, means reducing it to the neural event or state at the end of the causal chain, which means denying the relational view of experience in favour of the generative theory that experiences are generated by neural stimulation. The Sartrean construal of an experience as identical with a causal chain linking object to brain, then, must be understood as the claim that our best explanatory practice must quantify over the whole experience or causal chain as a genuine entity or event in its own right, rather than simply quantifying over the parts of that whole causal chain.

This ontological problem is not restricted to the relational view of phenomenal consciousness. The relational view of phenomenal consciousness requires a broad conception of action, and correlatively a broad construal of the subject of psychological theorising as not simply the brain or body but as literally including parts of the body's material environment. And the ontological problem that arises for the relational view of phenomenal consciousness also arises for the broad view of action, and hence for the notion of the extended subject. Imagine a counterfactual world that resembles our own in all respects except that the stuff that falls from the sky, fills rivers, lakes, and oceans, comes out of taps, and quenches thirst is not  $H_2O$  but XYZ.<sup>1</sup> In the actual world, at time  $t$ , I am thirsty and so reach out for the glass of water ( $H_2O$ ) I see in front of me; in the counterfactual world, I reach out at time  $t$  for a glass of some other substance (XYZ). In actual and counterfactual worlds, I perform different broad actions — in one I drink  $H_2O$ , in the other I drink XYZ. If, as Fodor (1987, 34-7) claims, these broad action specifications are simply the result of describing an action in terms of its environmental consequences, and the action itself is just the bodily movement involved, then I perform the same action in both situations. If experiences are supposed to explain actions construed as bodily movements, then since the movement is independent of the differences between the actual and counterfactual situations, so is the experience that explains it. Otherwise part of the specification of the

experience would be explanatorily redundant. But if the action to be explained is drinking H<sub>2</sub>O as opposed to drinking XYZ, then it can be explained by reference to a perceptual experience of H<sub>2</sub>O as opposed to one of XYZ (see Evans 1982, 203), and this allows the object apprehended into the specification of the experience in just the right way for experience to be a relation of apprehension. If the subject is just the body or something therein, then the actions of that subject cannot include anything outside the body. But if the subject is an environment-inclusive being-in-the-world, then the actions of that subject can include parts of the body's material environment, such as glasses of water.

Sartre clearly understands this link between his relational view of perceptual experiences and his conception of the extended subject. Indeed, he treats the claim that the subject is being-in-the-world as equivalent to his relational conception of consciousness, as when he writes: 'when we say that the for-itself is in-the-world, that consciousness is consciousness of the world, we must ...' (B&N: 306). And he claims that 'the senses are our being-in-the-world in so far as we have to be it in the form of being-in-the-midst-of-the-world' (B&N: 320, 325). Being-in-the-midst-of-the-world, or finding oneself surrounded by the world, is, for Sartre, perceptual awareness, of which vision is one variety. Human perceptual experience 'occurs within the limits of' being-in-the-world and 'takes it for granted' (B&N: 4). It both requires and signifies the basic structure of human being (see STE: 26-7).

Psychological explanation, on this Sartrean view, is explanation of actions broadly construed, since it is explanation of the behaviour of an extended subject. But this does not in itself explain why my bodily movements are the same in the actual and counterfactual circumstances, when I reach out for H<sub>2</sub>O and when I reach out for XYZ. Simply appealing to the claim that it is not my body which *acts* is not sufficient to evade this problem: the problem arises of explaining *how* it is that a body performs one action or another depending not on its internal constitution but on its environmental location (see Crane

1991, 7). If behaviour is construed narrowly as bodily movement, we can say that the body moves the same way in both situations because it is constituted the same way in both situations. But on the Sartrean picture, this order of explanation must be reversed: the body moves in a certain way not because of its internal constitution but because the subject (broadly construed) is performing a certain action (broadly construed); bodily movements involved in actions are to be explained only in terms of those larger actions. In Sartre's words, 'it is the whole which determines the order and the movements of its parts' (B&N: 326).

The crucial principle here is the claim that the same entity (in this case, my body) can move the same way in different contexts for different reasons. In the actual world over time-slice  $t$ , my hand traces a certain trajectory as I reach out for water. If we specify a collection of the sub-atomic particles that are actually part of my hand, we can imagine a counterfactual reality where over time-slice  $t$  those same particles trace precisely the same trajectory for some other reason — perhaps they are part not of my hand in that case, but of a butterfly caught on the breeze. If we wish to explain the trajectory of those particles, then we must take into account their context. We must take into account the behaviour of the larger entity of which they form proper parts. Similarly, for Sartre, some bodily movements are explained in terms of the environment-involving action that they are part of, and this action is explained in terms of environment-involving experience. Just as the movements of the sub-atomic particles are to be explained by reference to whether they are part of my hand or part of a butterfly, the movements of my body when I reach out for water are to be explained in terms of a larger entity of which my body is a part, the environment-involving 'I' or being-in-the-world that reaches out for water.

The ontological problem faced by broad actions and extended subjects is the same as that faced by the relational conception of experiences: unless they are quantified over in the best explanatory system, then they are not

ontologically genuine events or objects. In which case, bodily movements cannot be explained in terms of the broad action of the extended subject of which the body is a part. If broad actions and extended subjects are not ontologically genuine, action can only be construed narrowly as bodily movement, and this leads back to the denial of the relational view of experiences in favour of the view that experiences are generated within the body. The claim that ontology is dictated by explanatory practice, then, means that if there is no good reason to believe that the best system of explanation and hence prediction will quantify over experiences understood in Sartre's relational sense and quantify over extended subjects whose behaviour is explained by these relational experiences, or if there is good reason to suppose that the best system of explanation will not quantify over these things, then the subject will have to be identified with the body or brain and experiences will have to be construed as independent of the body's material environment. Section 4.4 is concerned with contemporary anglophone arguments for reductionism, which attempt to show that the best system of explanation will not employ psychological vocabulary. If these arguments work, then the best system of explanation will not quantify over relational experiences, broad actions, or extended subjects. I argue there that Sartre's position is not vulnerable to these attacks, and moreover that Sartre's position is positively preferable to reductionism. But that discussion requires understanding the basic ontological principles underlying Sartre's whole system, which is the subject of the next section.

### 4.3 Sartrean Holism

Sartre's ontological principles have two sources: the late nineteenth and early twentieth century French and German critiques of associationist psychology, and the ontological structures delineated by Husserl in *Logical Investigations*. The resulting principles are best expressed in the slogan that, in the case of psychological events and the structure of the subject, the whole is more than

the sum of its parts. This means that the explanatory role of a whole psychological event or a whole extended subject cannot be reduced to explanations in terms of the parts of that whole, their properties, and causal laws governing them. In order to explain the events to be explained by reference to experiences and extended subjects, that is, it is *necessary* to refer to experiences and extended subjects: reference to these entities cannot be replaced by reference to the parts that make them up.

In his first book, *Imagination*, Sartre is clearly opposed to any 'reductive analysis' that he equates with 'sheer mechanism' (IPC: 22). Reductionism is the product of 'the analytic spirit', he claims, which 'attempts to resolve a system into its elements and implicitly accepts the postulate that these remain strictly the same whether in isolation or in combination' (IPC: 20). Analytic thought, for Sartre, is not, as it is for twentieth century anglophone philosophers, a kind of thought that aims to clarify and resolve philosophical problems by analysing the language or concepts in which they are posed. It is rather the belief 'prior to all investigation, that the object in question is a combination of inert invariants in external relations' (IPC: 20). To understand a water molecule analytically, in this sense, is to hold that its behaviour can be explained purely in terms of the behaviour of two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom, where these behave exactly as they would had they not been part of a water molecule. The atoms are understood to be 'invariant' in that their behaviour is not affected by being part of a larger molecule; and the relations between them are understood to be 'external' in that they do not affect the behaviour of the atoms. Adopting this method leads inexorably to a certain ontology, in this example an ontology of water molecules that reduces them to collections of atoms: 'adopting a method ... [is] at the same time fashioning the object' since given the analytic method 'one is bound to explain the higher by the lower (*la supérieur par l'inférieur*)' (IPC: 77).

This method is taken by those who adopt it to be the method of science, and hence to be recommended on the grounds of the successes of science, but,

Sartre argues, ‘science “on the march” is neither pure analysis nor pure synthesis, adapting its methods to the nature of the object’ (IPC: 20). Sartre follows the Gestalt and Würzburg schools of psychology, and those influenced by them, in arguing against applying this reductive analysis to psychological events. Abandoning analysis is ‘progress’ (IPC: 119), he claims, because ‘[e]very psychic fact is a synthesis’ (IPC: 145). Synthetic, as opposed to analytic, thought recognises ‘the predominance of the whole over its component elements’ (IPC: 80). The synthetic approach to an object or event supposes that ‘the whole gives the parts their sense and value’ (IPC: 113).<sup>2</sup> The term I have translated as ‘value’ here is ‘*valeur*’, which does not exclusively mean moral or aesthetic value or worth, but also economic worth (or buying power) and, as I suggest it should be taken here, explanatory value.<sup>3</sup>

The Gestalt and Würzburg schools of psychology criticised associationism, a psychological theory which follows Hume (1975, § 3) in attempting to explain all thought and experience in terms of relations such as contiguity and resemblance between ‘ideas’, on the grounds that thought and experience are syntheses of their parts and so cannot be understood in this analytic way. Although Sartre agrees with this critique, he does not assimilate himself to this anti-associationist movement in psychology. There are at least three reasons for this. First, he claims that one of the motivations of the turn to synthetic principles was to combat individualism which was taken to lead to ‘anarchy in politics, and to materialism and atheism’. This could be combated only by the positing of ‘synthetic realities’ above the individual, such as ‘the family, the nation, the society’ (IPC: 26). Sartrean existentialism, as we shall see in 5.3, is opposed to postulating any synthetic entities above the level of the individual. Second, and more importantly, Sartre criticises the movement of synthetic psychology for not taking the idea of synthesis seriously enough, but instead inheriting the notion of the mental image as an inert element from its analytic predecessors (IPC: 19-36, 79-83, 113). Sartre blames the decline of synthetic psychology by the beginning of the 1930s on this incoherent

combination of products of analytic thought with synthetic principles (IPC: 145). Third, by the end of *Imagination*, Sartre has come to the conclusion that the results of empirical psychology are of no use in the construction of philosophical theories of mind, because they always presuppose some philosophical theory or other. Although psychological events must manifest and hence not be incompatible with the structures uncovered by phenomenology, therefore, empirical psychological claims cannot be taken as a ground for such findings. *Imagination* quietly traces Sartre's philosophical development very well in this respect. When he first discovered philosophy, he thought it a branch of psychology, a subjective description of consciousness (1981, 6 and 8), so that philosophy and empirical psychology could support and influence one another. But after reading Husserl he came to the opinion that psychology requires phenomenology as its foundation: phenomenology delimits the structures of consciousness, which will be exemplified by any actual psychological events and states, and so underpins empirical psychology in the same way that mathematics underpins physics (IPC: 129; STE: 25-6; PI: 1-2).

So although Sartre agrees with the synthetic psychologists' claim that reductive, analytic theories such as associationism are flawed by their failure to recognise the role a whole may play in explaining the behaviour of its parts, he does not derive his ontology of consciousness from the considerations of these psychologists. Instead, he derives it from the third investigation of Husserl's *Logical Investigations*. One anglophone philosopher has recently described this passage as 'perhaps the most significant treatise on the concept of part to be found in the philosophical literature' (Fine 1995, 463). In this passage, Husserl delineates his notions of whole and part, ontological dependence and independence, and abstract and concrete. This delineation is relevant here only insofar as it bears on Sartre's ontology. Husserl's distinction between wholes and parts is a relative distinction: a part is a part relative to the whole of which it is a part; if this part itself has parts, then it is a

whole in relation to them; and the whole of which it is a part may be a part of a larger whole. Every whole, though, has parts.

Husserl's distinction between abstract and concrete is coextensive with that between ontological dependence and ontological independence. A part of a whole may either be ontologically dependent on that whole, or ontologically independent of it. An ontologically dependent part can exist only as part of a whole. Husserl's example is colour (§ 7), but as the ontology of colour is part of the issue in this chapter, we can substitute shape: a shape is dependent on the whole of which it is a shape because there cannot be just shape without it being the shape of something. Shape is dependent (*Abhängig*) because it is not self-standing (*Selbstständig*), it cannot exist on its own (§ 5). Husserl dubs dependent parts 'moments' (*Momente*) and claims that they are abstract on the grounds that they cannot exist except as parts of a whole (§ 17).<sup>4</sup> Independent parts, by contrast, are entities whose existence is not dependent on a larger whole of which they are parts: 'they may, but need not, enter into more comprehensive wholes' (§ 7). In contrast to abstract moments, independent parts are concrete entities that Husserl dubs 'pieces' (*Stücke*). A whole entity, then, such as a table, is made up of parts. Some parts are dependent on being parts of the table (e.g. shape) and these are abstract moments of the table. The others are independent of their role in table-construction (e.g. atoms) and these are concrete pieces of the table (see also Husserl 1982, §15).

Husserl's ontology of parts and wholes makes no reference to explanation. In *Logical Investigations*, at least, he does not think of theory construction and evaluation in terms of explanatory and predictive value, but in terms of a priori laws, because his paradigm of reliable scientific theory is not experimental science but mathematics (see 1970, *Prolegomena*, §§ 67-71). By the time of writing *Ideas*, this use of mathematics as a paradigm had a new rationale: mathematics is the 'eidetic' science, the science of the essences of structures, which underpins physics (1982, § 9). Just as physics applies the

mathematical possibilities to the actual world, on this view, the formal ontology of *Logical Investigations* provides the structural possibilities that are to be applied to reality in ontology itself.

And this is precisely what Sartre does in *Being and Nothingness*: he applies the structures of Husserlian formal ontology to the ontology of consciousness and being-in-the-world. He criticises Descartes's inability to explain fully his notion of 'the substantial union of mind and body', and his related inability to account for mental causation, on the grounds that 'it is not profitable first to separate the two terms of a relation in order to try to join them together again later. The relation is a *synthesis*. Consequently, the *results* of analysis cannot coincide with the *moments* of this synthesis' (B&N: 3).<sup>5</sup> Analysing a whole into parts that function just as they would if they were not parts of a whole, applying the 'analytic' method, presupposes that all the parts of the whole are *independent* parts, or pieces. Dependent parts, or moments, cannot exist except as parts of a whole, and hence cannot feature among the results of such analysis. So if the whole is a synthetic whole rather than a mere aggregate of genuine entities, if the whole in question has moments as well as pieces, this fact about the whole will be missed by those employing the analytic method. Sartre is here claiming that the relation between consciousness and being in-itself is a synthetic relation involving abstract parts or moments, and which therefore cannot be completely captured by 'analytic' thought.<sup>6</sup>

He goes on to explain the relation between consciousness and what he shortly afterwards calls 'the synthetic relation which we call being-in-the-world' (B&N: 4). He begins by affirming Husserl's distinction between abstract and concrete entities: 'an abstraction is made when something not capable of existing in isolation is thought of as in an isolated state. The concrete by contrast is a totality which can exist by itself alone' (B&N: 3). This distinction between concrete and abstract is the traditional metaphysical distinction between substance and attribute, rather than the traditional logical distinction

between subject and predicate. The logical distinction is between a term which picks something out and a term which describes something already picked out, so to say that the ball is red is to predicate redness of the ball. But the fact that redness is a predicate here does not preclude it from being a subject elsewhere, as in the claim that the red is vibrant. To say that red is abstract, as Sartre does, then, is not to say that red is a predicate: whether or not red is a predicate depends on the context and is not a fact about redness itself. What is a fact about redness, though, is that it cannot occur except as a property of something else: if redness is postulated at all, then it must be as the red of something. The notion of a substance, on the other hand, is the notion of a thing to which predicates might be applied but which cannot itself be predicated of anything else. It is an item that can exist without depending on another item, or in Sartre's words, 'a totality which can exist by itself alone'.<sup>7</sup>

Since phenomenal consciousness cannot exist without an object of apprehension (see 1.1 and 2.1), an episode of consciousness is an abstract part of some larger totality which includes the object of apprehension as a part. The appearance, or phenomenon, is also abstract because it *is* the phenomenal consciousness: to be aware of an apple is for an apple to appear to one. And this requires, as Sartre points out (B&N: 3), someone for the apple to appear to, so the consciousness or appearance cannot be a property of the apple but must be a property of some larger object that includes that apple as a part. This concrete entity, 'the synthetic totality of which consciousness, like the phenomenon, constitutes only moments', he tells us, 'is man within the world in that specific union of man with the world which Heidegger, for example, calls "being-in-the-world"' (B&N: 3). Although Heidegger's term 'being-in-the-world' indicates being embedded in a social as well as a physical environment, and also indicates a certain essential relation to temporality (e.g. 1962, § 41), Sartre's conception of consciousness does not require assent to these aspects of Heidegger's analysis of the human way of being, requiring only the denial that the subject is contained within the skin

and in principle separable from its environment (see also Clark and Chalmers 1998, particularly p. 16).

A perceptual visual experience of a table, an episode of visual consciousness of a table, then, is the relation between the brain and the object seen, including all the physical events in between. But it is not a relation between the subject of psychological theorising and an object: the relation is internal to the subject. The part of this relation that makes it an experience is not an ontologically independent piece of the relation, such as a neural event, but an ontologically dependent abstract part or moment of the whole relation. The relation is to be taken as a synthetic whole event, and the talk of consciousness and appearance are to be taken as adverting to attributes of the synthetic whole. Similarly, the notion of being-in-the-world is meant to pick out a synthetic whole made up of being in-itself, centred on but not identical with the human body (the 'man' which is united with the world).

This does not mean that consciousness should be pictured as some ethereal substance floating above the chunk of being-in-itself that is the human body and its environment any more than the mass or shape of a table is an ethereal substance floating above its wood. And it does not mean that being-in-the-world is some ghostly entity binding various elements of being in-itself together, but that it is a region of being in-itself understood as a synthetic whole with attributes or properties that are not attributes or properties of its parts. Sartre is quite clear on this point: talk of a synthetic whole made up of being in-itself does not introduce *entities* that are not part of being in-itself, but rather classifies regions of being in-itself as wholes. Sartre calls these regions 'body' even though they extend beyond the flesh-and-blood animal bodies that they include:

'The body is nothing other than the for-itself ... it is the fact that the for-itself is not its own foundation ... As such, the body is not

distinct from the *situation* of the for-itself since for the for-itself, to exist and to be situated are one and the same' (B&N: 309)

The being for-itself, which exists in situation as being-in-the-world, then, is identical with a region of 'body': 'the body is a necessary characteristic of the for-itself ... the very nature of the for-itself demands that it be body' (B&N: 309); 'the soul is the body' (B&N: 310). And 'body' must be understood in the extended, environment-involving sense of situation:

'my body is everywhere in the world; it is over there in the fact that the lamp-post hides the bush which grows along the path, as well as in the fact that the roof up there is above the windows of the sixth floor ... My body is coextensive with the world, spread across all things' (B&N: 318).

Consciousness of the world, such as perceptual visual experience of it, must be predicated of this extended body. When Sartre claims that this body is 'coextensive with the world', 'world' here does not mean the totality of being in-itself but the world as experienced by me, which includes my human body and the objects of apprehension as they are apprehended rather than as they are in themselves (see 1.3). This body 'is a permanent structure of my being and the permanent condition of possibility for my consciousness as consciousness of the world' (B&N: 328): it is the subject that I am, and is required by the claim that my experience is apprehension of the world. The monism of Sartre's account is clearest when he writes: 'the body is what this consciousness *is*; it is not even anything except body' (B&N: 330).

Sartre's talk of the 'nothingness' of consciousness, as opposed to the being of being in-itself, then, should not be taken as a claim that a conscious event is something other than the region of being in-itself that makes it up. It is precisely that region of being in-itself. The term 'nothingness' should rather be taken as an alternative name for an abstract part, a moment, of such a region.

Calling consciousness a nothingness, that is, is meant to highlight the fact that the conscious aspect of a conscious event is not a proper part, a piece, of being in-itself but rather an attribute of a piece of being in-itself, a piece which itself can be broken down into pieces. In the case of vision, a perceptual experience is a region of being in-itself linking the object seen to the brain of the perceiver via lightwaves, retinas, and optic nerves. The conscious or experiential aspect of this event is not a piece of it, such as a neural event, but is an attribute of the event as a whole. Because it cannot exist on its own, because it is not a being, it is a nothingness. This is why consciousness 'is not even anything except body': it is not a *thing*, but an attribute of a region of body. We must, therefore, agree with Catalano (1974, 67; 1986, 41 and 45) that Sartre's ontology is not dualistic but monistic.

In order to maintain the claim that relational experiences and extended subjects are ontologically genuine entities, as we have seen (4.2), these entities must be postulated in the best system of explanation and prediction. This requires, in turn, that attributes be predicated of these entities in the best system of explanation. If everything there is to be explained can be explained without reference to properties of social groups, for example, then social groups are to be construed as no more than collections of individuals. And if the best system of explanation does not need to predicate of whole causal chains linking the brain to the object seen, then these causal chains are to be construed as a collection of individual events in sequence rather than ontologically respectable wholes. And, further, if the best system of explanation does not need to predicate attributes of extended subjects, attributes such as broad actions, then extended subjects are to be construed as mere aggregates of ontologically respectable entities, such as human brains or bodies and items in their environment.

Sartre argues that the nothingness of consciousness, the status of the conscious or experiential aspects of conscious or experiential events as attributes to be predicated of the whole event, is necessary to explain the

appearance of nothingnesses within the world. Entering the café where I have arranged to meet my friend Pierre and finding that he is not there, he claims, ‘cause[s] the absence of Pierre *to happen* as a real event concerning this café’ (B&N: 10). He goes on to argue that this absence in the world, this nothingness, cannot be produced by being in-itself, and so must be introduced by a being which is itself nothingness. Hence the experiential aspect of a conscious event must be a nothingness capable of introducing other nothingnesses into the world (B&N: 22-4). He goes on to argue that all the negations of the world, those that separate a figure from its ground (see 1.2), and that present the possibility of a negative answer to any question and the fragility and destructibility of objects (B&N: 5-9) are introduced by the nothingness of consciousness, and that this nothingness is itself experienced in anguish (B&N: 29-34).

But this argument is, to say the least, extremely problematic. One problem is that there seem to be plenty of other ways of construing the negative judgements involved in some experiences of the world without claiming that nothingness is itself experienced. Given Sartre’s own notion of the intentionality of experience as presenting an object under an aspect, it would seem that all that is necessary is possession of the concept of negation or absence and its application in experience. Sartre claims that understanding of negation can only be grounded in direct experience of nothingness in the world, just as understanding of being can only be grounded in direct apprehension of being (B&N: 17). But there seem to be plenty of alternative theories of the comprehension of logical constants, and Sartre has not considered them. Moreover, it does not seem that Sartre can insist that our comprehension of being and of nothingness are *both* founded on acquaintance with instances of them: since one is merely the absence or opposite of the other, it seems that acquaintance with either will suffice for understanding both. As we saw in 2.4, for example, Sartre’s claim that ‘being’ can be understood only by apprehension of it is undermined by the possibility that ‘being’ is understood through the experience of things resisting my will,

an experience that can be had on any conception of consciousness. So ‘nothingness’ could be understood, by contrast, through the responsiveness of imagined objects to my will.

This is not to say that Sartre is wrong to deny that the experience of Pierre’s absence from the café is to be understood in terms of experiencing what is present in the café and judging that Pierre is not there (B&N: 10): his claim that Pierre’s absence is *experienced as* part of the world can be conceded without also conceding that nothingness must be apprehended in order to be understood, since it may be that the concept of nothingness is prior to experience but one of the determinations that may be applied in experience (see 1.3).

Besides these problems with Sartre’s somewhat glib assertion of a theory of the comprehension of ‘nothingness’, it is difficult to see how his claim that the nothingnesses which we apprehend must be founded on the nothingness of consciousness is to be reconciled with his claim that consciousness, and hence being for-itself, ‘is not its own foundation’ but is founded on being in-itself (e.g. B&N: 309). If the nothingness of consciousness can arise from an organised region of being in-itself, why must the nothingness of Pierre’s absence be founded on a nothingness rather than on being in-itself? Sartre has no answer to this, partly because he does not attempt to explain the ‘upsurge’ of the nothingness of consciousness from being in-itself: his concern, he tells us, is with ontology, or what there is, and not with metaphysics, or how what there is came to be (B&N: 619-21).

Instead of attempting to plug the numerous holes in this argument, I will ignore it. This is for two reasons. First, the claim that a perceptual experience is an ontologically respectable whole event linking the brain of the subject to the object perceived, and the concomitant theory of the extended subject, are necessary aspects of Sartre’s relational view of consciousness, as we have seen (4.2). And this relational view of consciousness, as we have also seen

(3.3), is the only theory that ties experiences to mind-independent reality in a way that precludes the possibility of experiences occurring in the absence of mind-independent reality, and a theory that precludes this, as we have also seen and as Sartre points out (2.3), is to be recommended on the grounds that it avoids Humean scepticism about the nature of reality. (Sartre also has two positive arguments for his relational conception of consciousness, but these fail to establish their conclusion (see 2.4 and 2.5).) So the leaky argument that the experiential aspect of a conscious event must be considered a nothingness, an abstract moment of the event, on the grounds that we experience nothingness in the world, is superfluous for present purposes: its conclusion is required by the relational view of experiences which is recommended on other grounds. Second, the aim of this discussion is to assess whether Sartre's position, rather than his arguments for it, can survive the contemporary naturalistic attack on antireductionist approaches to consciousness. The attack is based on the claim that consciousness cannot have a role in the best explanatory system, and hence cannot be ontologically respectable, without being reduced to neural activity. In the next section, I spell out the arguments for this reductionist conclusion and argue not only that Sartre's position can be defended against them, but also that Sartre's holistic form of antireductionism is actually preferable to reductionism: there are explanatory gains to be had by agreeing with Sartre that experiences are identical with (but not reducible to) causal chains linking brains to objects of apprehension and construing the subject of such experiences as an environment-inclusive being-in-the-world.

#### **4.4 Naturalism and Reductionism**

Current arguments for the reduction of psychological states, events, properties, or whatever, to physical (usually neural) ones are based on the combination of the claim that ontology is dictated by explanatory practice with some version of the claim that the best explanatory system is natural science

and this system does not quantify over psychological entities. The first of these claims, detailed in 4.2, seems incontrovertible. If something has no explanatory role to play, then there can be no evidence for it, for if there were then it would explain that evidence. Sartre, moreover, claims that irreducible experiences of an irreducible extended subject do have an explanatory role, that in these cases 'it is the whole which determines the order and the movements of its parts' (B&N: 326). So the debate over reductionism hinges on the issue of whether the best explanatory system quantifies over relational experiences and extended subjects.

Quine argues that natural science is the best theory we have for predicting future observations on the basis of past ones, and so on pragmatic grounds we should accept as ontologically respectable only those entities quantified over in natural science (1981, 20-1). But this is not, of course, to say that the future best system of explanation, a completed natural science, will not quantify over relational experiences and extended subjects, and so leaves open the possibility that these are ontologically genuine entities. A more robust argument for reductionism is premised on the belief that natural science is explanatorily adequate, causally closed, or complete: every physical event that admits of causal explanation can be provided with a physical causal explanation (Lewis 1966, § IV; Kim 1989b, 43; Papineau 2000, 183-4). This claim gives rise to the problem of explanatory exclusion, the problem that a single type of event should not be systematically ascribed more than one complete and independent type of causal explanation. If a complete physical explanation of any physical event that admits of explanation, such as an action, can be given, it is argued, then there will be no room left for an explanation in any other terms unless that explanation is reducible to the physical one: it is implausible to claim that all actions have two complete and independent causal explanations, one physical and the other mental, either of which would have sufficed to bring about the action on its own.<sup>8</sup>

One problem with this argument is that it is not clear what 'physical' means in the claim that every physical event has a complete physical explanation. If it means the events picked out by current natural science, then it is simply not true to say that current natural science can explain every physical event. And if it means the events picked out by some future perfected natural science, then there seems no good reason to be confident that this future science will not include reference to mental events such as experiences (Crane and Mellor 1990, 188). But this problem is easily avoided. We can replace reference to physical or naturalistic explanations with reference to non-mental explanations. Any event that can be specified without using mentalistic vocabulary, according to this version of the argument, can be given a complete explanation in terms of events that can be picked out without using mentalistic vocabulary. So a human action can be explained without reference to experiences, beliefs, and desires. There are two ways to support the claim that a complete non-mental explanation can be given of any event specifiable in non-mental vocabulary. One is to appeal to the development of natural science: over the last couple of centuries, explanations in terms of the influence of forces have generally either been reduced to explanations in terms of the basic physical forces, or eliminated from explanations altogether, so that explanations of non-mental events need not make reference to any forces but the basic ones (Papineau 2000). The other is to point out that mental events or properties are not independent of non-mental events but are accompanied by them and in some way founded upon them. So any event that can be explained by reference to mental events or properties, such as a human action, can also be explained with reference to the non-mental events that the mental events or properties are founded on (Kim 1993, 203-10; 1997, 282-7; 1998, 38-47).

In this way, the problem of explanatory exclusion certainly arises for Sartre's theory of phenomenal consciousness. An experience, for Sartre, is not a free-floating event over and above the causal chain linking the brain to the object of apprehension, but is identical with that causal chain (see 4.3), and the

causal chain can be specified without the term 'experience' or any other mentalistic vocabulary. An action that can be explained with reference to this mental event, then, can be given a complete explanation in terms of the non-mental specification of that event, the causal chain. Since the causal chain *is* the mental event, that is, one explanation entails the other. The only way to defend Sartre's position against this argument is to deny the claim that we should deal with the problem of explanatory exclusion by including only the non-mental explanation in our best explanatory system. What needs to be denied, that is, is the claim that the explanation in non-mental terms, in terms of the causal chain, is to be considered as the complete and independent explanation, and the mental explanation that refers to the experience is thereby to be reduced to it. As we have seen (4.2), this reduction would be disastrous for Sartre's position.

Kim has given two related reasons for this claim that only the non-mental explanation should be included in our best explanatory system, but neither is convincing. At one time he argued that explanatory priority is to be given to the lower-level explanation on the grounds that science progresses when higher-level explanations are replaced by lower-level ones (1989a, 84-5). A similar claim is that when one entity is ontologically dependent on another, any explanation in terms of the first must be dependent on an explanation in terms of the second (1989a, 90). This claim is similar because higher-level events are ontologically dependent on lower-level ones, so again higher-level explanations are in principle to be replaced with lower-level ones. The problem with this claim that higher-level explanations must be reducible to lower-level ones is not simply that it would remove genuine causal explanation from the realms of such respectable sciences as geology, biology and neurophysiology (Baker 1993, 77). Perhaps genuine causal explanation must seep down away from these sciences, even though, as Burge (1993, 102) points out, it has never been shown to. The more important problem with the principle that explanation must seep downwards to ever lower levels of science is that it simply does not seem true even in the case of the

incontestably respectable science of chemistry. Explanations of events in terms of the properties of water molecules cannot be replaced with explanations in terms of hydrogen and oxygen atoms: water molecules have properties that neither hydrogen nor oxygen atoms have. Of course, there is no more to a water molecule than two hydrogen atoms and an oxygen atom standing in a certain bonding relation, but the behaviour of these atoms is to be explained by reference to their place in this structure, and hence this structure, this water molecule, must be quantified over in the best system of explanation. And this point is not restricted to chemistry. If we want to explain why an ice-skater, to change the example, fell through the ice, we must quantify over the ice-skater. The ice-skater had a certain mass that put more pressure on the ice than the ice could take. No part of the ice-skater had that mass: the explanation must quantify over the whole ice-skater, the whole collection of ice-skater parts held together in a certain way.

It is for this reason that Kim rightly abandoned the principle that all explanation seeps downwards in favour of a picture of explanation which, like Sartre's ontology, allows for genuine, non-reducible explanations in terms of wholes made up of parts. Rather than embrace the 'excessively narrow' and 'groundless' conception of genuine causal explanation that his original principle leads to (Kim 1998, 113), he argues that genuine physical explanations can be given in terms of two sorts of properties in addition to those that feature in basic physics. The first sort are functional properties, second-order properties defined over physical properties. Such a property is the property of having a physical property with a certain causal role. The dormativity of a sleeping-pill is such a functional property, as it is the property of having some physical property that makes people go to sleep. Different physical properties can play this functional role. Moreover, since it is the first-order, physical property that plays the causal role, functional properties do not introduce new causal powers into the world: the pill does not put you to sleep *because* of its dormativity, but rather it has dormativity *because* it puts you to sleep. Thus, explanations in terms of functional properties *reduce* to

explanations in terms of the first-order properties they are defined over (see Lewis 1966; Kim 1998, 97-106).

The second sort of property that is not mentioned in basic physics but which can feature in a genuine causal explanation nonetheless is a ‘micro-based’ property (Kim 1998, 84), the kind of property which Armstrong terms a ‘structural’ property (Armstrong 1978, vol. 2, ch. 18). This is the property of having proper parts of certain kinds and standing in certain relations. Being a water-molecule is the micro-based property of being composed of two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom in a certain bonding relation. Such a property counts as physical only if the constituents are physical and the relation is physical. But the micro-based property is not identical with the properties of its parts since it is a property of the higher-level entity of which they are parts, and it features in explanations that the constituent parts cannot feature in: water molecules do things that neither hydrogen nor oxygen atoms can (Kim 1998, 85 and 116-7). Explanations in terms of micro-based properties, then, are not reducible. The higher-level entity is what Sartre calls a ‘synthetic whole’. Analysing it into its proper parts, or pieces, overlooks its micro-based properties, which are abstract parts or moments of the whole that explain things that cannot be explained just by reference to the pieces. The whole with a micro-based property is greater than the sum of its independent parts.

Kim argues that mental events and properties must be reduced to other properties by being understood as functional properties on the grounds that they cannot be understood as micro-based properties of a larger whole. The reason he gives for this is that neural properties are not properties of parts of entities that have mental properties. Rather, neural and mental properties ‘are at the same level ... they are both had by human beings and other sentient creatures’ (1998, 117). But this begs the question against Sartre’s form of holism, according to which mental properties are had by extended subjects and neural properties are had by neural systems which are *parts* of subjects.

So long as the subject of psychological theorising is not identified with the neural system, there is no reason why mental properties should not be thought of as properties of subjects, properties defined in terms of the constituent parts of subjects, and since Sartre does not identify the subject with the neural system, his position is immune to this objection. So long as my perceptual visual experience of a table, for example, is not predicated of my brain but is predicated of the extended subject of which my brain, the table, and other events connecting them are parts, that is, there seems no reason why the experience cannot be understood as a micro-based property defined in terms of those parts.

It might be thought that the variable realisability of mental properties precludes understanding them as micro-based properties of subjects defined over the properties of parts of subjects. The micro-based property of water, for example, is defined in terms of hydrogen and oxygen particles, but there is no such simple definition of the neural state required by a particular mental property. Any one of a number of possible neural states or events might be present when the subject is undergoing a certain experience (see Putnam 1968). But there seems no reason why we cannot construe mental properties as variably realisable micro-based properties, defined as properties of entities having proper parts meeting one of the specifications from a certain list.

The argument for reductionism, therefore, fails to show that mental events such as experiences must be reduced to the non-mental events that help to constitute them. But in addition to this, there seems to be positively good reason *not* to reduce them but rather to include them in the best system of explanation and prediction. The reason for this stems from the variable realisability of mental events. My token perceptual visual experience of a glass of water is in fact identical with a set of non-mental events of type P, but an experience of the same kind might have been identical with a set of non-mental events of the different type Q, or R, or S ... etc. To reduce the explanation of my reaching out for the glass of water from an explanation in

terms of my experience to an explanation in terms of the non-mental events it is identical with, then, is to claim that the basic system of explanation includes not just one explanation for my behaviour, but a whole set of them: the behaviour could be explained by any of P, Q, R, S, etc. Aside from the simplicity of including just a single type of explanation in the best system, that in terms of the mental property related to each of P, Q, R, S etc., including the single explanation represents an *explanatory gain* over reduction: it explains *why* each of P, Q, R, and S all produce the same effect; it explains that each of these distinct types of event produces the same effect *because* each is the foundation of the same type of experience and the effect is to be explained in terms of that type of experience.

It seems, then, that an experience should not be reduced to the non-mental events that help to constitute it, but should rather be quantified over in the basic system of explanation as an ontologically genuine event with a distinct explanatory role. But this does not yet show that the *relational* conception of an experience as identical with the causal chain linking apprehended object to brain, rather than as generated by neural stimulation, is ontologically acceptable, for it does not yet show that the extended subject required by such a conception of perceptual visual experience is acceptable. Kim's claim that mental properties must be reduced to neural ones since they are properties of the same entities fails to impugn Sartre's holistic antireductionism on the grounds that Sartre's position denies that the subject is the neural system, but Sartre's conception of the extended subject is not the only conception of the subject that evades Kim's objection: simply identifying the subject with the whole body of which the neural system is a part will suffice.

The foregoing argument, however, can be adapted to show that the subject should be construed as the environment-dependent being-in-the-world rather than simply the body, by showing that there is an explanatory gain to be had by construing the actions that experiences explain as environment-involving

behaviour rather than mere bodily movement. This explanatory gain stems from the fact that environment-involving behaviour, like the experience that explains it, is multiply realisable: there are even more ways to pick up a glass of water than there are to skin a cat. If action is construed simply as bodily movement, then the experience that explains the action will explain each of the possible overall bodily movements that could have occurred, each of movement-types P, Q, R, S, etc. But if action is construed broadly, as environment-involving, then this explains *why* each of P, Q, R, and S can be explained in terms of the same kind of experience: each of P, Q, R, and S are the foundations of the same type of environment-involving action, and this environment-involving action is to be explained in terms of a certain kind of experience. There is, therefore, an explanatory gain to be had by construing action broadly. This, in turn, requires that the entity that acts, the subject of psychological theorising, be construed broadly as being-in-the-world: quantifying over broad actions involves quantifying over extended subjects that perform them.

Sartre's ontology of experience and subject, then, is both immune to the contemporary physicalist arguments for reductionism and preferable to reductionism. Sartre's position agrees with one premise of the argument for reduction, that any non-mental event that can be given a complete explanation can be given a complete non-mental explanation, so any event explainable in mental terms is also explainable in non-mental terms. But it denies that the mental explanation is thereby to be reduced to the non-mental one, claiming instead that the mental explanation has a place in the best explanatory system and the non-mental explanation can be given only because the non-mental events it specifies are parts of the mental event specified in the mental explanation. Kim's claim that the reduction must be made since explanations always seep downwards seems false in the light of the irreducibility of water molecules to the atoms and relations that make them up: the best system of explanation will quantify over water molecules in order to explain things that cannot be explained in terms of hydrogen and oxygen

atoms themselves. Kim's attempt to disallow applying the water molecule model to psychological explanations presupposes that psychological predicates are applied to the same entities as certain physical predicates. But on Sartre's model, this is simply not true: psychological predicates are applied to the subject understood broadly as being-in-the-world, where physical predicates are applied to parts of this broad subject, including brains and parts of the environment.

Sartre's model is holistic: the relation between an experience and the causal chain of events that it involves is a mereological relation; the experience is a whole of which the events in the causal chain are (independent) parts. And this requires his holistic model of the extended subject: the subject is a whole of which brain, body, objects of apprehension, and everything linking such objects to the brain, are (independent) parts. It is this holistic character of Sartrean antireductionism that renders it immune to the argument for reductionism. Current anglophone forms of antireductionism do not have this holistic character, holding that mental properties are properties of brains supervening on their neural properties (e.g. Searle 1983, ix; Nagel, 1986, 32; Honderich 1988, 165), and are for that very reason vulnerable to the argument for reductionism. These theories cannot resist Kim's argument because they predicate both neural and mental properties of the same entities: brains. And this leads to the problem of causal-explanatory exclusion: non-holistic antireductionisms *either* lead to the systematic postulation of *two* complete and independent explanations of every deliberate action, *or* must deny that a complete neural explanation can be given of action without providing a framework for understanding how it is that the mental properties can make a difference to the causal powers of the neural properties. Understanding experience as a property of an entity of which the brain (with its properties) is a part evades this problem: the behaviour of the part is explained by the behaviour of the whole of which it is a part, just as the motion of a hydrogen particle that is part of a river is explained in terms of the movement of the river. Antireductionism, then, requires holism.

Holistic antireductionism, moreover, makes positive explanatory gains over reductionism: it explains why diverse types of physical event can all result in the same kind of bodily movement and, conversely, why diverse kinds of bodily movements can issue from the same physical or experiential event. Diverse physical events can issue in the same bodily movement because they all underpin the same mental event, such as an experience, and this mental event explains the bodily movement; diverse bodily movements can be explained in terms of the same mental event because those movements underpin the same kind of broad action and it is this broad action that is explained in terms of the mental event. In the next section, I will argue that this holistic framework has a further advantage over reductionism: it can block the classical attack on the claim that phenomenal consciousness is apprehension of mind-independent reality outlined in 4.1 whilst doing justice to *both* the fact that the colours of experience are only ever experienced as aspects of the world *and* the fact that the colours of experience have a particular phenomenal, qualitative nature that cannot be analysed purely in terms of representational content.

#### 4.5 Colour and Qualia

Sartre's relational view of experience, as we have seen (4.1), seems vulnerable to the classical attack on naïve realist theories of vision which points out that the familiar phenomenal colours of everyday visual experience cannot be construed as aspects of the mind-independent reality seen. Descartes and Locke base their forms of this argument on the claim that natural science is the best guide to mind-independent reality and does not quantify over colours. Since the colour a surface seems depends on the structures of the eyes of the beholder and on the colours of adjacent and nearby surfaces, moreover, it simply does not seem that the phenomenal colours of experience are aspects of the mind-independent objects we see.

Even if, as Campbell (1993, 263) suggests, we can understand colours as properties of objects supervening on the microphysical structure of their surfaces, these colours are not the same as the phenomenal colours of experience. These colours, if there are such things, remain constant while the phenomenal colours we experience vary with lighting conditions, retinal structures, coloured lenses, and the proximity of objects with different reflectance properties. Phenomenal colours of experience, then, are not properties of the surfaces of objects. What are they?

The challenge to Sartre's relational conception of experience is to explain apparent phenomenal colour without predicating colours of the regions of being in-itself seen and without undermining the claim that experience is not generated by neural stimulation but is identical with (but not reducible to) a causal chain of events linking object to brain. In order to preserve the relational conception of experience, that is, phenomenal colour must be analysed in terms of some aspect of visual experiences themselves in a way that does not lead back to the claim that perceptual visual experiences are generated within the skin. There are two ways to analyse colour in terms of an aspect of visual experience. One is to claim that the apparent colours of objects are a result of the representational content of the experience: apparent colours are representations of some aspect of mind-independent reality. The other is to claim that apparent colours are not representational at all, but are simply qualities of the experience itself, or 'qualia'.

The first of these options is not available to Sartre, for two reasons. First, the notion that colour is a matter of the representational content of some experiential state leads to a denial of Sartre's strong disjunctivism in favour of the view that perceptual visual experiences are generated within the skin. Since all perceptual visual experience presents objects (or appears to) that are coloured, if my experience of colour is a matter of being in a state that represents a mosaic of coloured patches around me, then there is no room left for a relational component of the experience. My entire experience could

be understood in terms of this representation, perhaps with some additional representational content, without any need to postulate in addition any relation other than representation between my brain or body and the seen object. If this representation can be specified independently of environmental conditions, this position would be one of intentionalism, indirect realism, or phenomenism (see 2.1). If, on the other hand, the representation of coloured expanses is in some way dependent on conditions in my immediate environment, then this position would be the weak form of disjunctivism that postulates object-dependent representations (see 3.2). Either way, construing colour experience in terms of representing the environment leads to a construal of perceptual visual experience itself as representation of the environment whereas Sartre claims that a perceptual visual experience is not a representation of an object but is apprehension of it.

The second reason why Sartre must construe colour experience in terms of qualia rather than representational content is his broadly empiricist theory of the acquisition and application of the concepts (or 'determinations') under which we classify objects in thought and perception. These representations, he claims, are built up from repeated exposure to the qualities of objects that surround us, and their employment as part of the structure of experience is motivated by the presence of the relevant qualities in the visual field (see 2.5). If this theory of the acquisition and application of classificatory representations, such as 'red', is not to be circular, the presentation of qualities involved must not itself be a presentation of representations. Instead, the representations must be built up and applied on the basis of some non-representational aspect of experiences.

So in order for Sartre's theory of visual awareness to be acceptable, it must be possible to explain the appearance of phenomenal colour in terms of nonrepresentational aspects, or qualia, of relational perceptual experiences. Sartre says very little about colour in this connection, but I will show that his theories of the felt qualities of emotion and pain provide a framework that can

equally be applied to colour qualia within his theory of relational perceptual visual experiences, and that he intended this framework to apply to colours and other qualitative aspects of experience.

The central claim of Sartre's *Sketch for a Theory of Emotions* is that emotion 'is a specific manner of apprehending the world' (STE: 57). This should not be taken to mean, as Crane (1998) takes it to mean, that emotion is a mode of, or a family of modes of, intentional awareness of the world, just as vision and hearing are modes of intentional awareness. Loving or hating something, on this reading, are manners of apprehending the object just as seeing or hearing it are. It should rather be taken as the claim that emotions are modifications of modes of intentional awareness of objects, so that love and hate are not intentional relations to objects themselves but are ways in which intentional relations to objects are coloured or textured. The loved object, on this reading, literally *looks* loveable to the lover. Sartre claims that the instrumental ('hodological') values and structures of objects as tools or obstacles in relation to my aims and projects are values and structures 'of the world given to perception' (STE: 63). Instrumentality is a feature of the world in ordinary phenomenal consciousness (see 1.3), and it is precisely this instrumentality that is lost when consciousness is subject to emotions such as anger (STE: 58) and fear (STE: 88-9). Emotion is a manner of apprehending the world, then, in that it alters the way in which the world is seen and otherwise experienced (see also STE: 64-5). This view is retained in *Being and Nothingness*. Sartre there claims that 'affective qualities', or qualia of emotion, such as shame, are 'simply a matter of the way in which consciousness exists its contingency; it is the very texture of consciousness ... it is the manner in which consciousness exists' (B&N: 331). Shame is not a kind of consciousness of the world, then, but the 'texture' of consciousnesses; it is not a *kind* of conscious event alongside vision but a modification of conscious events such as vision, a way in which awareness of the world is 'lived' (*vécu*) by consciousness (B&N: 331).

Sartre's account of the qualia of emotion is sketchy to say the least, but he is most explicit on the subject of pain. Pain, he tells us, is not an intentional event in itself: 'pain is totally void of intentionality' (B&N: 332). The pain in my eyes as I read a text, he claims, 'is not distinguished from my way of apprehending transcendent words' (B&N: 332-3). Of course, if I turn my attention from the book to the pain in my eyes itself, then the intentional object of my awareness, the figure posited on the ground, will be my eyes, and the pain will be a modification of my coenaesthetic awareness of my eyes. But while attention remains focused on the book, the pain is a modification of my visual awareness of the book. If attention is focused on the book and the pain is in my finger or back, so that it does not affect my vision, then 'the pain in my finger or back is [part of] the apprehension of the world as ground' (B&N: 335). My nonthetic awareness of the world as ground on which the book stands as figure can be as affected by the qualitative feel of pain as can my awareness of the book. Pain, then, is 'the translucent matter of consciousness, its *being-there*, its attachment to the world' (B&N: 333); to be in pain is to be the subject of conscious relations to the world 'whose contexture, whose being-there [is] painful' (B&N: 333). To be in pain is to apprehend the world painfully.

Sartre applies this model of qualia to vision only once. 'Blindness, Daltonism [colour-blindness], and myopia [short-sightedness]', he claims, 'originally represent the way in which there is a world for me; that is, they *define my visual sense* in so far as this is the facticity of my upsurge' (B&N: 319; my emphasis). If we are to take 'blindness' here in its usual sense as a catch-all term for a wide variety of sight deficiencies, rather than in its narrow sense of the rare condition of a total lack of eyesight, Sartre is here claiming that these conditions are modifications of seeing, conditions which affect the ways in which the world is seen. To the short-sighted, for example, the world is seen vaguely and fuzzily; to the colour-blind it is seen monochromatically or according to some other nonstandard colour scheme. Colours, along with the

relative vagueness or sharpness of the entities seen, are a matter of *the ways in which objects are seen*. Colour terms are adverbs of seeing.

This adverbial theory of qualia terms does not assimilate Sartre's position to the adverbial theories of perception. According to those theories, to say that Jones sees a red ball is to say that Jones experiences redly and roundly. Experiences, on this view, are modifications of the subject, and do not involve the apprehension of any (mind-independent or mind-dependent) object (e.g. Chisholm 1957, 120-5). The claim that qualia terms are adverbs of *experience*, on the other hand, is compatible with Sartre's relational view of experience as apprehension of part of mind-independent reality: qualia are simply modifications of those relational events.

Sartre's theory, then, can meet the challenge presented by the arguments outlined in 4.1: it can provide an account of the appearance of phenomenal colour without predicating colours of regions of being in-itself or undermining the relational conception of perceptual visual experience by claiming that our experience of colour is generated within the skin. The experience that is identical with but not reducible to a certain causal chain linking object to brain can have qualia predicated of it. The fact that the colours of visual experience are dependent on the structures of the eyes of the beholder as well as on environmental factors such as lighting conditions and the surface reflectance of objects does not show that colour experience itself is in or behind the eyes of the beholder. The dependency need not be causal, but may be one of supervenience. The adverbs used of the whole event of awareness may, in the terminology introduced in 4.4, be considered to pick out variably realisable micro-based properties: given certain surface reflectance structures, lighting conditions, and retinal structures, as well as structures of the optic nerves and brain, a whole event made up of a causal chain linking object to brain via reflection of light into the eyes of a subject will have the property of revealing that object to the subject redly.

It might be thought that the fact that such conditions as short-sightedness and colour-blindness can be traced to defective retinal structures shows that visual experience occurs within the skin, but such a thought would confuse two questions. The medical question is concerned with the differences between those who are and those who are not short-sighted or colour-blind. And this question is answered by the fact about retinal structures. The philosophical question is concerned with what it is to see objects in one way or another, and the Sartrean answer to this question is that seeing is a relational event whose parts involve neural patterns, retinal structures, lightwaves, and the surface reflectances of the objects seen, and seeing an object a certain way is a matter of the phenomenal character of this whole relational event, a phenomenal character which will supervene on the structure of the relational event. This is quite compatible with the medical facts: the structure of the event can be altered by altering the surface of the object, the lighting conditions, the structures of the retinas, or the chemicals present in the brain; and altering the structure of the relational event in any of these ways can alter its phenomenal character, because the phenomenal character supervenes on the *whole* lower-level structure of the event. Such a supervenience of the phenomenal character of experience grounds its nature as an objective event: anyone capable of reproducing the conditions in which the experience occurred will have an experience of the same phenomenal character; anyone with a visual system relevantly similar to mine can see the colours I see in the conditions in which I see them.

The central objection to qualia, voiced by those who prefer to construe colour experience in terms of representational content, concerns the transparency of experience, the fact that in order to describe an experience of the world it is necessary to describe the world as it seems (see Strawson 1979, 43-4; Evans 1982, 227-8; Valberg 1992, ch. 2). Colours appear to be properties of things, not of experiences. In seeing the deep blue of the ocean, the objection runs, I am aware of just that – the deep blue *of the ocean*: my experience represents the ocean as deep blue; my experience is not an awareness of the

ocean coupled with a blueness that is the property of the experience. The experience of the ocean, then, is transparent: we cannot separate out in our experience properties of the experience from properties the object is experienced as having. And this, the objection runs, shows that colour experience must be analysed not in terms of properties of experiences as such but in terms of properties that objects are represented as having, in terms of content, not qualia (Harman 1990; Tye 1992; Crane forthcoming, § 4). Sartre does not base his view of qualia on a claim that we can experience qualia separately from the objects of experience. Phenomenology, for Sartre, is not about what it is like to have a certain kind of experience or the way the world seems in a certain kind of experience: it is a study of *what it is* for something to appear to us (see 0.3). And he readily admits, in fact, that colour qualia cannot be experienced except as seeming to be properties of objects:

'we never in ourselves encounter that phantom and strictly subjective impression which is sensation. One will admit that I apprehend only *the green* of this notebook, of this foliage and never the sensation of green nor even the "quasi-green" which Husserl posits as the hyletic material which the intention animates into the green-as-object ... I never encounter anything but objects in the world' (B&N: 315-6).

And the same goes for the qualia of emotions and pain:

'a joy, apprehended on the unreflective level, is only the "reflected" presence to a laughing and open world full of happy perspectives' (B&N: 173)

'Neither must we say that the pain is an "overprint" or that it is like a harmony "superimposed" on the things which I see' (B&N: 333)

If qualia can occur only as modifications of conscious relations, if colour qualia can occur only as modifications of perceptual visual relations to objects, then colour qualia cannot be experienced separately from awareness of objects. And if, moreover, colour qualia are modifications of visual relations to objects, if the appearance of phenomenal red is to be analysed as the appearance of an object redly to a subject, then the phenomenal red will always appear to be a property of the object seen: if the object appears redly to me, then the object looks red to me. Looking at a white wall with ordinary eyesight in ordinary lighting conditions, the wall looks white to me, but if I modify the relation between the wall and my brain by donning rose-tinted spectacles, then the wall will look rose to me. Or, to switch examples, we can say that I am always aware of my foot in proprioception and kinaesthesia, but that sometimes I am aware of my foot painfully, which is to say that the foot appears to me painfully, which is why the pain is felt to be located in the foot (compare Crane forthcoming, § 6). Switching examples again, ‘the man who is angry sees on the face of his opponent *the objective quality* of asking for a punch on the nose’ (B&N: 163; my emphases). If qualia are modifications of relational events linking objects to brains, then it is impossible to separate qualia from objects of experience and qualia will be experienced as properties of the objects: they will be properties of the world, where this is taken to mean the world of experience rather than being in-itself (see 1.3). These facts can hardly be used to mount an objection to qualia when qualia are understood as modifications of the apprehension of reality.

Analysing colour experience in terms of qualia rather than representational content, moreover, seems to be the only way to do justice to the nature of our colour experience. The first problem encountered by representational theories of colour concerns the correctness conditions for the representations: just what does the experience of a certain shade of blue represent? There are two possible answers to this question. One is that they represent the mind-independent structures that cause them. Each colour-representation, on this view, has a disjunctive set of correctness conditions, matching different sets

of surface reflectances, lighting conditions, and proximities to other types of surface and lighting (Dretske 1995, 88-93). The other is that they represent objects as actually having phenomenal colours. An experience that represents a tomato as red, on this view, represents the tomato as having the property of being red. There are two variants on this view. One is to claim that since colours are not properties of mind-independent reality, colour representations are always misrepresentations: their correctness conditions are never fulfilled, so they never represent reality correctly (see Mackie 1976, 14). The other is to claim that colours really are properties of mind-independent objects: they supervene on the physical structures of objects, and explain why objects look the way they do in ordinary light (Campbell 1993, 263).

The problem with representationalism about colours, however, is that whatever it is that the phenomenal colours of experience represent, it seems that they do so in a particular way. In which case, they cannot be analysed purely in terms of what they represent. The way in which they represent, if they do, moreover, seems to be a particularly qualitative way. If the phenomenal colours of experience represent objects to be coloured, as Mackie and Campbell claim, then this could be represented by co-ordinates that specify locations on a three-dimensional colour chart, for example. And if they represent the physical conditions that give rise to them, as Dretske claims, then these could similarly be encoded in numerical formulations. Experience could represent precisely what these theories claim it represents, then, without there being phenomenal colours of experience. The world could look like a complex colour-by-numbers picture. But it does not. So the phenomenal colours of experience cannot be accounted for purely in terms of what they represent. The phenomenal colours of experience, that is, can be understood as representational only if it is allowed that they represent in a certain way. And the difference between this way of representing and other ways of representing the same facts seems to be qualitative. It seems to be a matter, that is, of the qualitative nature of the representations, which brings the notion of colour qualia back into the account. But given that the Sartrean

account provides an explanation of how it is that objects appear coloured without making reference to representations of colours, it seems that since qualia cannot be removed from the account, the talk of representation is redundant. The phenomenal colours of experience, then, are best construed simply as qualitative modifications of the visual experience of objects.

The Sartrean view of colour, then, is that reality appears coloured because of the way in which it is apprehended in vision. The colours of experience are modifications of relational visual experiences of objects and supervene on the physical structures of those experiences. Once this move has been made, Campbell's (1993, 263) claim that colours can be considered as objective properties of objects supervening on the physical structures of their surfaces which explain why things look certain colours in ordinary conditions is redundant. Things look to be coloured in certain ways in ordinary conditions, if indeed ordinary conditions can be specified, for precisely the same reason that they appear coloured in other conditions: because given a certain physical structure of a relational experience, the experience will have a certain qualitative property in virtue of which the object looks to be a certain colour. And if qualia are construed as modifications of relational events linking seen objects to bodies or brains, then the transparency objection to qualia is no objection: the Sartrean view *entails* that we cannot see pure colours but only parts of the world as coloured. So Sartre's relational view of perceptual visual experiences, together with his remarks on the qualia of emotion, pain, and vision, provide a framework for analysing colour that does justice both to the transparency of experience and to the apparent fact that the colours of experience have a particular phenomenal, qualitative nature that cannot be analysed purely in terms of representational content without needing to claim that colours really are properties of the objects of experience.

Crane (forthcoming) advocates a different relational theory of intentionality, according to which the phenomenal character of an intentional state is given by the combination of its content and the mode in which that content is

presented. Seeing an aeroplane is different from hearing one. Pain, he argues, can be construed as a mode of awareness: English grammar aside, you can *pain* your foot just as you can *see* it. The distinctive feeling of pain, on this view, is like the distinctive nature of seeing as opposed to hearing: it is a result of the mode of awareness. This account, however, has a principal shortcoming that the Sartrean account of qualia does not have. Treating pain as a sense modality like vision fails to take account of the qualitative differences between varieties of pain. Moreover, since colours are to be accounted for within a theory of vision, Crane's account of pain qualia cannot be extended to colour qualia, and so cannot rival the representationalist account of colour. This latter theory seems not to do justice to the fact that the same set of aspects of the environment could be represented by different experiences, the fact that the world does not look like a colour-by-numbers picture. The Sartrean theory, on the other hand, provides a single type of account for all qualia of experience while leaving the different modes of intentionality as the generally accepted senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, proprioception, kinaesthesia.

#### 4.6 Conclusions

In this chapter, then, we have seen that the ontological principles of part-whole relations that Sartre has adopted from Husserl provide him with a framework for his relational theory of phenomenal consciousness and his related view of the extended subject that is immune to both the classical and the contemporary naturalist arguments against naïve realist theories of visual awareness. Sartrean holism, as we have seen, is the view that a conscious relation to an object is identical with but not reducible to a causal chain linking object and brain or body. In the case of visual experience, this is a causal chain involving lightwaves, retinas, and optic nerves. This relational event is identical with but not reducible to the causal chain in that the best system of explanation and prediction of events will, on Sartre's view, quantify over the

whole relational event, not just over the parts that make up the causal chain. This is because the whole relational event has properties, such as colour qualia in the case of vision, which must be mentioned in an explanation of the behaviour that issues from the experience.

We have seen (4.4) that Sartrean holism is preferable to its central rival, reductionism, on the grounds that Sartrean holism has explanatory gains to make over reductionism, and hence a greater contribution to make to the future predictively perfect system. It can explain, where reductionism cannot, why diverse types of physical event can all result in the same kind of bodily movement (because they all underpin the same mental event, which in turn explains the bodily movement) and why diverse kinds of bodily movement can issue from the same physical or experiential event (because they underpin the same kind of broad action, which is explained in terms of the mental event). We can now add to this that holism is preferable to reductionism on the grounds that holism can account for the qualia of experience as properties of conscious relations. Reductionism is caught on the horns of a dilemma when it comes to qualia: either admit that qualia are epiphenomena of experience or analyse them as representations in order to reduce them to their causal roles. The problem with the first horn is that there do not seem to be any epiphenomena, so this is tantamount to denying colour experience altogether (4.2), and the problem with the second is that it does not seem possible to analyse colour experience purely in terms of representation (4.5). So long as colour experiences are considered to have distinctive qualitative aspects, reductionism will lose out to the Sartrean holist view of these qualia as properties of the larger irreducible event.

Together with his distinction between 'world' and 'being in-itself', this theory of colour allows Sartre to affirm that the world we experience is coloured while the mind-independent reality out of which it is formed is not. The world, for Sartre, is formed by the interplay of consciousness and being in-itself. More accurately, my world is the way being in-itself appears to me (see 1.3). So my

world contains all the colours it seems to, along with other instrumental properties linked to my projects, such as the property of being a table, even though the appearance of these colours is dependent on the structures of my retinas. And the fact that these colours are not properties of being in-itself does not preclude my perceptual visual experiences being direct relations to chunks of being in-itself: the direct relations have properties, which we can think of as filters, which ensure that mind-independent reality appears coloured to me even if it is not so.

The considerations of this chapter also ground the fact that Sartre's theory of phenomenal consciousness is immune to the group of classical arguments against naïve realist theories of vision that has not yet been considered. These are the arguments from illusion. These arguments are based on a mismatch between the way reality seems in experience and the way it really is. One form of the argument claims that reality is not really coloured, and we have seen that the Sartrean construal of colour qualia as modifications of experiential relations means that reality will look coloured even if experience consists in apprehension of a non-coloured reality. Another form is based on science: a table, according to Eddington (1928, xi-xii), is mostly empty space pervaded by fields of force, but it looks like a solid object. Still another form is based on perspective: a table appears to grow larger as we approach it, but the table of course does not change in size (Hume 1975, 152). Snowdon (1992) has pointed out that these arguments do not force us to conclude that the object of apprehension in perceptual experience is not a part of mind-independent reality, such as a table, since to say that something *looks* solid or *looks* to diminish in size is not to say that anything really *is* solid or really *does* diminish. Given the Sartrean view of modifications of visual experience, we can explain how the way something looks may differ from the way it is. The way it looks, that is, is not simply a function of the way it is, but also of the structures of our awareness of it. It is the 'texture' or 'translucent matter' (B&N: 331, 333) of consciousness that accounts for the fact that a certain region of space pervaded by force fields, if that is the correct way of

describing mind-independent reality, looks solid. And perspective is similarly a function of the relation of apprehension: the size something looks to be is partly due to facts about the relation of apprehension, such as the length of the causal chain involved.

Sartre's ontology of the subject as not the brain or body but an environment-including being-in-the-world, furthermore, means that his position is immune to an argument against externalist theories of mental events that we have not yet considered. This argument is based on the principle that events and states can feature in an explanation of the behaviour of a certain entity only if they occur within or are states of that entity or their influence on the behaviour is mediated by some event occurring within or state of that entity. Character traits of your parents are relevant to explaining your behaviour only if those character traits are genetically encoded or socially transmitted and are now also traits of yours; raising the temperature around the fuel will cause the fuel to ignite only if it first causes a raise in the temperature of the fuel. The thought that scientific psychology must obey this principle underlies the argument that a relation between subject and object cannot explain a piece of behaviour unless it explains an event within the subject that issues in that behaviour, but since the causal aetiology of this inner event is irrelevant to its issuing in that behaviour and since the behaviour in question includes the speech-behaviour that describes the experience or other mental event, the inner event that issues in this behaviour *is* the experience or other mental event in question (e.g. Fodor 1987, ch. 2; Crane 1991, 8-9). As Dretske puts it: 'The itch I feel has to be in me to explain why I scratch' (1995, 35; see also McDowell 1986, 152-3). It is for this reason that many philosophers believe that 'mental phenomena are to be located where the persons that undergo them are' (Macdonald 1990, 399). And since the persons that undergo mental phenomena are usually identified with brains or bodies, the argument concludes that mental phenomena such as experiences must occur within the brain or body and so do not involve parts of the body's material environment.

This argument has not previously been considered in this thesis because the status of the principle that it rests on is unclear. Although there seem to be no counterexamples to it (see Webber 2000), the principle is usually assumed rather than argued for. But we can now see that Sartre's position is immune to this argument even granting this principle. Sartre's relational conception of experience, that is, does not hold experience to be a relation between the subject of psychological theorising and the object: it is a relation between brain or body and object, and this relation is wholly within the subject. The subject, for Sartre, transcends the body and includes parts of the body's physical environment. And this allows him to agree that the experience is an event within or state of the subject even though it is not an event within or state of the body.

Wider's (1997) error, in claiming that Sartre treats the human body as the subject of consciousness, is *either* not to notice that although Sartre does use the term 'body' in this sense of the-skin-and-within in some discussions, he claims that the subject of psychological theorising is 'body' in the Cartesian sense of region of mind-independent reality (see 4.3), *or* to confuse two senses of 'subject': the body in the sense of the-skin-and-within is indeed at the subject-end of an intentional relation, but the whole relation including the entities at the subject and object ends are all *within* the subject of psychological theorising, the entity that perceives and acts, the being-in-the-world. Sartre does hold, that is, that 'the human body is the subject term of conscious relations' (Morris 1975, 31), but it does not follow from this that 'consciousness ... can be ascribed to the human body itself' (Morris 1975, 47). Rather, the two claims are incompatible: as Sartre is aware, the former requires that the subject of psychological theorising, the entity to which conscious events are ascribed, must be a being-in-the-world whose 'body' extends beyond the skin and includes the entities that lie at the object ends of its conscious relations.

The ontological structures that underpin Sartre's conceptions of the relational nature of consciousness and the extended nature of the subject show that Sartre's theory of reality is not one of structural idealism, but of structural realism. Being in-itself, within Sartre's system, must have mind-independent ontological structures, for the emergence of conscious subjects requires these structures. The fact that some regions of being in-itself (such as human bodies or brains) can be at the subject-end of intentional relations where others (trees, tables) cannot further shows a commitment to structural realism: there must be some structural difference between those chunks of being in-itself that can be at the subject-end of intentional relations and those that cannot. The analysis of colour qualia in terms of the structures of the different types of causal chains linking objects to brains via lightwaves and retinas provides further evidence of structural realism underpinning Sartre's system: if the causal chains did not (of their own nature) have different structures, whence the different colours? Sartre's comments that appear to commit him to structural idealism, to the claim that being in-itself is in itself undifferentiated, must be taken as a commitment to the claim that the structures of the world as it appears to us and as we live in it do not purely reflect the structures of being in-itself, but also of our projects and concerns.

The ontological structures underpinning Sartre's system, moreover, form a monistic framework. There is, for Sartre, one single hierarchy of structures of one single type of substance: being in-itself. Some chunks of being in-itself are made up of smaller proper parts, and some are proper parts of ontologically genuine larger wholes. The 'moments' predicated of wholes, on which their ontological genuineness rests, are not ethereal entities made of some other substance, but simply properties that must be predicated of the larger whole entity. Sartre, then, is not a Cartesian dualist. Being and nothingness are not two substances. A nothingness is a part of an entity that cannot exist on its own, an 'abstract' part or 'moment', whereas a being is a proper part, a 'concrete' part or piece, that can exist on its own. The extended subject, or being-in-the-world, is made up of various proper parts (all regions

of being in-itself, which Sartre calls 'body') bound together by the nothingnesses of consciousness, such as qualia.

Sartre's Cartesianism comes to this: because the behaviour of the extended subject must be explained by reference to the intentional conscious relations between body and object that help to make it up, because being-in-the-world and its mental life and behaviour cannot be reduced to a mechanistic interaction of the subject's proper parts, the behaviour of the subject is explained only by conscious events. The immediate explanation of my action, on the Sartrean holist account, makes ineliminable reference to a conscious event: such an explanation cannot be replaced by a mechanistic neurological explanation. Sartre is Cartesian because he equates human freedom with the ineliminable explanatory role of consciousness (see B&N: 24-5).

## **Conclusion**

### **Existentialism and Mind**

This thesis has investigated four central aspects of the theory of phenomenal consciousness in the early works of Jean-Paul Sartre: his understanding of experience as an intentional relation, his arguments for his claim that experience is direct apprehension of a part of mind-independent reality, his theory of the difference between perceptual and hallucinatory experience, and his ontology of experience and the subject of experience. In this conclusion, I summarise my exposition and assessment of these aspects of his theory (5.1), before drawing out its ramifications for the conception of phenomenology and general ontological principles that should be ascribed to Sartre (5.2) and for central aspects of his existentialist theory of human nature (5.3).

#### **5.1 Review**

The theory of phenomenal consciousness in the early works of Jean-Paul Sartre, then, holds that experience is a relation between the brain or body of the subject and an object of apprehension, and that awareness of the

qualitative aspects of this object motivates the application of classificatory 'determinations'. In the case of perceptual experience, these determinations aim to track the manifest qualities of the object of apprehension, classifying that object both in terms of its own properties and in terms of the aims and projects of the subject. Because the determinations aim to classify the object of apprehension in perceptual experience, this object of apprehension is the intentional object. In imaginative experience, such as hallucination, on the other hand, the determinations are cued by the qualities of the object of apprehension but do not aim to classify that object itself. Rather, they stipulate an imagined object. This is the intentional object, the object posited and to which attention is paid. The determinations applied on the basis of the manifest qualities of the object of apprehension are themselves acquired from previous experience. These determinations are built up through a process of 'polyvalent negation', and so pick out objects and qualities by picking out what they are not. This approach to determinations saves the broadly empiricist claims that these determinations are acquired on the basis of experience and deployed in experience on the basis of qualitative awareness of the object from objections based on Wittgenstein's private language argument. This structure of experience as involving qualities and determinations, for Sartre, means that the world of everyday experience is constructed by the interplay of consciousness and being in-itself.

This theory of the structure of experience was detailed and discussed in chapter 1. Sartre's arguments in favour of a relational conception of intentionality, of experience as literally including the parts of mind-independent reality experienced, was the subject of chapter 2. There we saw that the introduction to *Being and Nothingness*, 'The Pursuit of Being', aims to establish this conception of experience. Sartre provides three arguments for it, two of which he runs together and presents as a single 'ontological proof' of his claim. Neither of these two arguments, however, succeeds in establishing its conclusion. The third argument, that Sartre does not emphasise, is that unless we consider experience to literally include parts of reality, unless we

deny that experience is ontologically independent of the surrounding environment, we will be encumbered with the impossibility of providing a definitive and conclusive ontology of reality. Given that the relational conception of experience is the only conception that guarantees that an experience cannot occur in the absence of a mind-independent object of apprehension (3.3), we can agree that Sartre's conception of experience is the only conception that does not foreclose the project of providing a definitive and conclusive ontology. But this does not show that conception to be correct, only desirable. Sartre's failure to establish his position, however, does not mean that the position is of no interest to current debate.

The importance of Sartre's position to current debate became clear in the remainder of the thesis, which discussed the motivations for denying such a relational conception of experience in favour of the view that an experience is ontologically independent of the environment. The same experience can occur as either perceptual or hallucinatory, on this 'two-component' view of perception, and is perceptual only if it accurately represents and / or is caused by part of the environment. The first set of motivations for the two-component view concern the phenomenon of hallucination. In chapter 3, we saw how Sartre's position is immune to all four versions of this motivation. Sartre holds that both perception and hallucination involve apprehension of a mind-independent object, and the deployment of determinations. The difference lies in the attitude in which the determinations are deployed: in perception, they aim to track the qualities of the object apprehended; in hallucination, they specify a distinct, intentional object. The four forms of the argument from hallucination for the two-component view of perception all rest on one of three principles that Sartre's position already denies. Since subjectively indistinguishable experiences may involve different objects of apprehension, and hence be different experiences, Sartre's position denies that the subjective indistinguishability of perceptual and hallucinatory experiences means that they are the same type of experience. Since Sartre holds experience to consist in a relation of apprehension rather than a

representation generated by neural stimulation, his position is immune to the objection that the same type or token experience as is involved in a perception could be brought about by artificial neural stimulation in the absence of the object actually perceived. And since Sartre holds there to be an object of apprehension in hallucination, his position is immune to the objection that the experience that explains the hallucinator's behaviour does not involve an object of apprehension and so neither does the experience that explains the perceiver's behaviour. In the course of this chapter, we also saw that current anglophone attempts to evade the arguments from hallucination can provide no satisfactory response to the argument that the same token experience can be brought about as either a perception or an hallucination. The problem with these attempts lies in their affirmation of the claim that perceptual experiences are brought about by neural stimulation. The argument from hallucination cannot be evaded except by following Sartre in denying this claim (3.3).

The second set of motivations for denying the relational conception of experience in favour of the two-component theory of perception is based on ontology. There are two such motivations, which were discussed in detail in chapter 4. First, since phenomenal colours, colours as we experience them, are not features of mind-independent reality, it is argued, visual perceptual experience cannot be considered a direct apprehension of mind-independent reality. The Sartrean construal of the colours of experience as qualitative properties of experience, we saw, can account for the distinctive qualitative nature of colour experience where its representationalist rival cannot, and allows for the fact that the colours we experience are not experienced as properties of the experience but as properties of the world. And we also saw that Sartre's appeal to modifications of relational experiences allows him to evade all forms of the argument from illusion, which claims that reality is not the way it seems in experience so experience cannot be direct apprehension of reality. The way reality seems, for Sartre, is partly due to facts about the way in which it is apprehended.

The second ontological motivation for denying the relational view of experiences is presented by the principle that ontology is best dictated by explanatory practice. Whatever can be explained by an experience, moreover, can also be explained by the non-mental events involved in that experience. Many current anglophone philosophers conclude from this that experiences must be reduced to neural states or events. But, as we have seen, there is no good reason to accept the claim that the best explanation of behaviour will refer only to neural events. There are, moreover, explanatory gains to be had by explaining behaviour in terms of experiences themselves: it explains why each of a set of distinct types of neural event may result in the same type of action. Experiences should not, if this is right, be reduced to neural states or events. In the course of this discussion, we saw that Sartre's relational conception of experience requires a broad construal of actions as including parts of the body's physical environment as well as the movement of the body. And we saw that this requires that the subject that experiences and acts, the subject of psychological theorising, is not the brain or body but an environment-inclusive extended subject, or being-in-the-world. These Sartrean conceptions of broad action and the extended subject, I argued, also make explanatory gains over the reductionist view of the subject as the body or brain and its actions as bodily movements. They explain why distinct types of bodily movement may be explained by the same experience: because they are different ways of performing the same broad action, and this is explained by the experience. If this is right, Sartre's holistic position is preferable to the reductionist claim that the subject is the brain or body, its actions are simply movements of the body, and the experiences that explain them occur within the body.

The theory of phenomenal consciousness in the early works of Jean-Paul Sartre, then, occupies a distinctive and challenging position in debates over consciousness. The radically challenging nature of the theory is due to its denial of some of the basic tenets of theories of experience. First, it denies

that experience is basically a matter of representation, claiming that an experience itself includes the experienced object. Second, and relatedly, it denies that experience is generated by neural stimulation, claiming that an experience is a relation between brain and object. And, third, it denies that hallucination is experience in the absence of a mind-independent object of apprehension. These three denials, together with a theory of the different application of determinations in perceptual and hallucinatory experience, are sufficiently robust to withstand the motivations for the standard view that an experience is generated by neural stimulation and may occur as either perceptual or hallucinatory, and so is ontologically independent of extra-cranial reality. The mainstream anglophone attempt to resist these motivations retains the claim that experience is a form of representation generated by neural stimulation, and as we saw in 3.3 this attempt fails. In conjunction with the denial of the traditional belief that the subject of psychological theorising is an entity in principle separable from the physical environment, such as the body; brain, or soul, in favour of the claim that it is a being-in-the-world comprising the body and parts of the body's environment, Sartre's position provides an ontology of experience and the subject that resists arguments for reductionism and is preferable to it, and which provides an innovative approach to the experience of colour and other qualitative aspects of experience such as pain. In extricating this detailed and robust position from Sartre's texts, I hope to have vindicated my claim in the introduction to this thesis (0.5) that careful exegesis involving historical analysis may yield positions more challenging to contemporary thought, and hence of more interest to contemporary debate, than will be yielded if it is presumed that the text shares the concerns and conceptual apparatus dominant in one's current philosophical milieu. Two key parts of this exegesis in the present case, for example, are recognising that for Sartre 'phenomenology' is the study of what appearing is, and hence includes ontology within its purview, and that for Sartre 'intentionality' is not representation.

Having summarised the major claims of this thesis and their importance to current debates over consciousness, the rest of this conclusion is concerned with the ramifications of my exegesis and assessment for the phenomenology and ontology that should be ascribed to Sartre (5.2) and for the distinctive claims of existentialism that Sartre builds on his theory of consciousness (5.3).

## **5.2 Phenomenology and Ontology**

In the introduction to this thesis (0.3), we saw that phenomenology, for Sartre as for Husserl and Heidegger, is a study of what it is for something to appear to one, and that the ontology of appearance is thus within the purview of phenomenology. And we also saw that since Sartre holds that appearance is always the appearance or apprehension of a part of mind-independent reality, the ontology of appearance includes within it the ontology of mind-independent reality, and hence phenomenology includes general ontology within its purview. We also saw that, like Husserl and Heidegger, Sartre aims to pursue phenomenology without relying on any presuppositions embodied in the culture or otherwise imported from other theories and without the colouring of idiosyncratic prejudices. But, as we saw, his phenomenological method is not the same as either Husserl's or Heidegger's. Sartre, like Heidegger, rejects Husserl's method of phenomenological reduction, but unlike Heidegger he retains Husserl's belief that the structures of appearing, once viewed without presuppositions about their nature, can simply be described. Having studied in detail Sartrean phenomenology in action, we are now in a position to delineate more sharply the kind of phenomenology Sartre is engaged in. And we can situate the resulting ontology, Sartre's conception of the relation between consciousness and reality, more precisely in relation to the forms of realism and idealism delineated in 0.4. This section discusses these issues.

It may seem that there is a contradiction at the heart of Sartre's phenomenology. We saw in chapter 3 that Sartre recommends approaching ontology not in abstract terms, in terms of types of event, but in concrete terms, in terms of token events (3.3). But we also saw that he considers his phenomenology to be an eidetic science, aimed at identifying the essences of the events under discussion (3.5). The apparent contradiction arises from the fact that it is only as a certain type of event that an event could have the kind of essence Sartre aims to identify. He aims to identify, for example, the essence of perceptual experience and the essence of imaginative experience, but a token event could only have such an essence given that it is an event of the perceptual experience or imaginative experience type. Sartre himself does not seem to have seen any contradiction in this. In *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*, he characterises phenomenology as being concerned with concrete events and essences in the same sentence: 'the principle of phenomenology is to "go to the things themselves", and its method is founded upon the eidetic intuition' (STE: 21). The apparent contradiction is resolved by the facts that by a 'concrete' object or event, Sartre means to include the types that the token falls under – 'a spatial-temporal thing, *with all its determinations*, is an example of the concrete' (B&N: 3; my emphasis) – and that he does not object to discussing types of object or event as such, but only to discussing them without consideration of their instantiations. He objects to discussing appearance, for example, without consideration of concrete events that fall under the type 'appearance', on the grounds that such a discussion is liable to overlook aspects of those concrete events other than the aspect of being an appearance. Some of these aspects may turn out to be essential to the event's being an appearance. An appearance, Sartre points out, is an appearance of something to something, and so an event can fall under the type 'appearance' only if it includes a thing which appears and a thing to which it appears (B&N: 3). It is essential, that is, to an appearance that it is a concrete event involving a thing which appears and a thing to which it appears. This essence of appearance is liable to be overlooked, Sartre claims, by any philosophy that studies the abstract notion of 'appearance'

without consideration of concrete appearances (B&N: 3-4). Such a philosophy, that is, is liable to reify appearance rather than treat it, correctly, as the appearing of something (compare B&N: xxxvi). Sartre's phenomenology is based on consideration of concrete events, then, on the grounds that the essences of types of events are not likely to be correctly identified if we consider only those types themselves and not the conditions required for their instantiation.

A second question about Sartre's phenomenology is whether it is presuppositionless. Whether, that is, Sartre adheres to Husserl's methodological principle that we should 'avail ourselves of nothing but what we can make essentially evident by observing consciousness itself' (1982, § 59). We saw in chapter 1 that Sartre's first step in pursuing his phenomenological ontology is to point out that unless we allow consciousness to be direct apprehension of reality, it will be impossible to formulate a definitive ontology. So it may seem that the first step of Sartre's phenomenological ontology is based on the presupposition that a definitive ontology *can* be formulated or that a definitive ontology *should* be formulated. But these are not the sort of presuppositions that phenomenology aims to preclude. They are not theoretical claims imported implicitly or explicitly from previous theoretical work or idiosyncratic or cultural prejudices concerned with the nature of the object of investigation. They are rather part and parcel of the enterprise that Sartre is engaged in: the aim of attempting to provide a detailed and justified general ontology requires a starting point that allows the formulation of that ontology.

The formal ontological structures that Sartre imports from the work of Husserl and on which he bases his own ontology (see 4.3), however, seem more like a presupposition. After all, Sartre employs these structures without defending their use: he simply acknowledges his debt to Husserl (e.g. B&N: 3). But this does not mean that these formal ontological structures can only be considered a presupposition of Sartrean phenomenology. The study of

appearance can itself, without presupposing these structures, reveal them as possibilities instantiated in the regions of reality that appear to one. The notions of wholes and their abstract dependent parts (moments) and concrete independent parts (pieces), that is, can be derived from consideration of the appearing of reality. There are, as Sartre points out, two ways in which a region of the world can be focused on and picked out as a figure, as an object of attention. It can be picked out in contrast to the rest of the world outside of its borders, picked out against a background, in which case it is identified as a whole entity. A table, for example, can be picked out in contrast to all that surrounds it (see 1.2). Or it can be picked out not only in contrast to the world beyond its borders, but also in contrast to other aspects of the world within its borders. The colour of a table, for example, can be picked out in contrast to all that surrounds it and in contrast to the shape and texture of the table, neither of which lie beyond the borders of the colour (see 1.5). On the basis of this difference in the way figures can be picked out, against a background or against a background and an 'inner ground' (B&N: 188), the distinction between a whole and a dependent part of a whole can be made. A whole can be picked out only in the first way; a dependent part of a whole (which cannot occur except as part of a whole) can be picked out only in the second way. An independent part of the table, such as a leg, is a part that can exist apart from being part of the table, and hence is in itself a whole, so the notion of an independent part can be derived from the notion of a whole. Thus, the part-whole formal ontology that Sartre imported from Husserl could have been developed purely on the basis of a phenomenological distinction that Sartre himself makes, the distinction between background and inner ground, and hence should not be taken as a presupposition necessary to Sartrean phenomenological ontology.

We have not found in the course of this thesis, then, any cases of presuppositions on which Sartre's theory of phenomenal consciousness is based, except the presupposition of Husserl's formal ontological framework, and it turned out on closer inspection that this framework need not have been

imported from Husserl but could have been formulated on the basis of Sartre's own phenomenological observations. We have found, then, no important way in which Sartre's phenomenology fails to be presuppositionless: the only presupposition we have found need not have been one. The ontology of experience and its objects delineated and defended in this thesis, then, was formulated by Sartre on the basis of a descriptive phenomenology without the aid of a phenomenological reduction, a phenomenology which seems to have been genuinely presuppositionless, and which proceeded by describing concrete instantiations of the types of appearance, perceptual and hallucinatory, under consideration.

The resulting ontology, as we have seen, is one of ontological realism: the reality in which we live, and which we apprehend directly, is independent of our awareness of it and thought about it for its existence. Indeed, its existence is independent of all conditions: it is being in-itself. In addition to this ontological realism, we must ascribe to Sartre a structural realism according to which being in-itself is structured in a certain way independently of our awareness of it or thought about it. This is for three reasons. First, Sartre's application of Husserlian formal ontology to his conception of being in-itself is a claim about the structure of being in-itself. Being in-itself, that is, consists of whole entities which have independent parts (themselves wholes), and dependent parts which cannot exist except as parts of wholes. Sartre's claim that experience is direct apprehension of mind-independent reality together with the fact that the formal ontological distinction between independent parts and dependent parts can be gained from the distinction between background and inner ground in experience, moreover, licenses the application of this formal distinction to the structures of reality, and so vindicates Sartre's claim that Humean scepticism about the structures of reality can be overcome by allowing that experience is direct apprehension of reality (see 2.3). Second, we have seen that qualitative, phenomenal colour is to be accounted for within Sartre's ontology as a modification of the awareness we have of regions of being in-itself. Different parts of reality appear to us in different

ways, that is, and there does not seem to be any way of accounting for this difference except in terms of structural differences between those parts of reality. Third, phenomenal consciousness is a relation that arises between regions of being in-itself, a relation that can arise for example between my brain and a table that I can see, but only certain regions of being in-itself can be at the subject-end of these intentional relations. A table cannot be conscious of me. There must, therefore, be some structural difference between my brain and the table. It seems, then, that for these three reasons we cannot agree with Wider (1990) that Sartre holds being in-itself to be an unstructured mass before it gains structures from the consciousness I have of it, or with Danto (1991, ch. 1) and Baldwin (1996, 86) that Sartre holds being in-itself to be unstructured but appear structured to me (see 1.2). We must rather agree with McCulloch (1994, 111-7) that Sartre holds being in-itself to be already structured in itself, and that this structure is to some extent responsible for the ways in which I can be aware of it: I can pick something out as a figure against a background and an inner ground only if it is a dependent part of some whole, and I can pick something out as a figure against a background but no inner ground only if it is a whole or a collection of wholes.

But Sartre's distinction between being in-itself and the world must be borne in mind: his structural realism with respect to being in-itself does not preclude elements of transcendental idealism with respect to the world. In fact, his position is a third way between transcendental realism and transcendental idealism: although some of the structure of the world is provided by the structure of being in-itself, and hence is independent of the way in which we are aware of it, this is not true of all of the world's structure. The world includes colours that result from the way in which we are aware of being in-itself (see 4.5), and tools, obstacles, and values that result from our being aware of being in-itself through lenses cast by our aims and projects (see 1.3). The structure of the world, then, is neither wholly mind-independent nor wholly mind-dependent, but a combination of the two.

Given that Sartre holds mind-independent reality to be structured in itself, then, he can also hold that this structure can be captured in the linguistic net. He can also, that is, be a semantic realist with respect to being in-itself. On the one hand, it seems that Sartre must be a semantic realist: his ontology is specified in language and can only be considered an attempt to capture the structure of reality. On the other hand, though, it may seem as though his claim that 'every determination is a negation', that 'the understanding in this sense is limited to denying that its object is *other* than it is' (B&N: 14; see 1.5) may preclude the possibility of language picking out the actual structures of reality. This is because the claim that something can be picked out only in terms of what it is not seems very close to the claim that words can only be defined in terms of other words and so cannot refer to parts of extra-linguistic reality (see Hegel 1977, §§ 96-99). But to say that a determination's reference to an object or type of object is fixed by distinguishing that referent from everything that it is not is *not* to say that the determination refers only to other determinations. Just because the *report* of the way in which the determination refers will make use of other determinations, it does not follow that the reference of the determination itself depends on other determinations. Features of a report should not be confused for features of the thing reported (see 1.1). So we can allow Sartre the claim that the determinations under which we can think of mind-independent reality can capture the structure of that reality, and so the words used to express those determinations can express that structure too.

This semantic realism with respect to being in-itself is matched by one with respect to the world. The structures of the world provided by the way in which we are aware of being in-itself *are* structures of the world. The world really does consist of blue things and red things, chairs and tables, tools and obstacles, and values, and so our language that reports these things can capture the structure of the world. Sartre, like Kant, is an empirical realist: the world of experience may be partly mind-dependent, but that does not mean

that we cannot capture its structure in language. Unlike Kant, however, Sartre does not consider the contribution the mind makes to the construction of the world to be a matter of the application of determinations that are innate and a priori and hence universal. If my visual system is structured differently from yours, our worlds will contain different colours. If my aims and projects differ from yours, then our worlds will differ over the tools, obstacles, and values they contain. A distinction must be drawn, then, between the world each individual inhabits and the shared world inhabited by all. Of course, these are not ontologically distinct regions, since we are all aware of the same being in-itself, but they have distinct manifest structures since the same being in-itself appears (to some extent) differently to each of us. So although my world contains the structures it appears to have, and so my reports can capture the structures of my world, it does not follow that the shared world contains these structures. The shared world contains the structures that we all agree on. There follows from this, then, a certain pragmatism about truth that Sartre mentions occasionally in *Being and Nothingness*: we should 'not ... confuse the objectivity of the world-for-me with a stricter objectivity, which is the result of experimental measures and the agreement of minds with each other' (B&N: 311; compare B&N: 51). The precise formulation of this pragmatist theory of truth was to occupy Sartre for some years after the publication of *Being and Nothingness*, but the project was eventually abandoned. His notebooks on the matter, which never reach a conclusion that satisfies their author, were published posthumously (1989), and have been translated as *Truth and Existence*. But the issue of formulating this theory of truth is not important for classifying Sartre as a semantic realist with respect to the world. The fact that statements true of my world need not be true of yours or of the shared world does not entail that statements cannot be made of the shared world: the terms used of my world can in principle succeed in capturing aspects of your world or of the shared world, and so Sartre should be considered a semantic realist about the shared world and worlds of others as well as our own individual worlds.

The ontology that Sartre formulates on the basis of his phenomenology, then, is one of ontological realism combined with structural and semantic realism about this mind-independent reality: being in-itself is structured independently of our awareness of it or thought about it, and this structure can be specified in thought and language. The structure of the world I experience, though, is only partly provided by the structure of mind-independent reality. The rest of the structure of my world is provided by the ways in which I am aware of it and my aims and projects. In this sense, my world differs in its structure from yours. Sartre holds a combination of structural realism and structural idealism with respect to the world. But the language I use of parts of my world succeeds in picking out aspects of that world, and could in principle succeed in picking out aspects of your world and of the shared world, so Sartre should be considered a semantic realist with respect to the world as well as a semantic realist with respect to being in-itself.

### **5.3 Existentialism: Freedom, Bad Faith, The Look**

The theory of phenomenal awareness that Sartre formulates in his early works is the basis of his existentialist theory of the nature of human existence. Through the application in experience of determinations based on our aims and projects, as we have seen (1.3), we form our individual worlds of tools, obstacles, and values out of the shared environment of being in-itself. We are, for Sartre, in this way responsible for the situations we find ourselves in: the situation is partly a function of our aims and projects; the same region of being in-itself would ground a different situation if we had different aims and projects. But this is not the only aspect of Sartrean existentialism that is based on his theory of phenomenal awareness. In this section, I aim to show the extent to which the major themes of Sartrean literature – freedom, self-awareness, bad faith, and the alienation and conflict of interpersonal relations – are built on Sartre's theory of phenomenal consciousness.

Sartre's theory of freedom, as we saw in 4.6, is partly a result of the related theories of relational consciousness and the extended subject. The behaviour of the subject must be understood not as mere bodily movement, but as the environment-including actions of the extended subject, and can only be explained with reference to episodes of relational consciousness. The movements of the body involved in an action are to be explained by reference to their place in that larger action. In this way, Sartre secures freedom from mechanism: human bodies are not fleshy machines whose movements are to be explained by internal processing of electrical signals initially stimulated by aspects of the environment; the best explanations of human behaviour make ineliminable reference to consciousness. But there is more to Sartrean freedom than this. Sartre defines freedom as 'the unconditioned power of modifying situations' (B&N: 350), and this requires not just that consciousness cannot be reduced to or understood as caused by a lower-level mechanism, but also that consciousness is independent of the social world. And Sartre's ontology of relational consciousness and the extended subject underpin this aspect of his existentialism too. Sartrean holism extends no higher than individual extended subjects. Groups of individuals do not form higher synthetic wholes; there are no irreducible properties to be predicated of them. They are mere aggregates of wholes whose behaviour can be explained in terms of the properties of the individual members: 'the "we" is not an inter-subjective consciousness nor a new being which surpasses and encircles its parts as a synthetic whole' (B&N: 414; see 233-252). This insistence on the autonomy of the individual within the society is a distinguishing feature marking out Sartre's later Marxism from that of his contemporaries. Structuralist Marxists, such as Althusser (1990), understood social groups such as classes as genuine wholes, so that the behaviour of individual members of the groups is to be explained by reference to their membership of the group. The first volume of Sartre's *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, subtitled *Theory of Practical Ensembles*, by contrast, is largely concerned with reconciling apparent group dynamics with the autonomy of the individual by showing how various types of group behaviour can be reduced to individual

psychology by reductive analysis in terms of the common purposes of the members of the group. The group is not a synthetic whole; it is not a 'hyper-organism' (Sartre 1960, 398-410). A basic feature of Sartre's existentialism is thus preserved in his Marxist theory. Sartre's existentialism and Marxism are individualistic and humanistic because of Sartre's ontology: the individual exists as an ontologically genuine entity over and above the body and its parts, and hence is free from physiological determinism, and yet the society of which the individual is a part is not an ontologically genuine entity over and above the individuals that are its components, but is instead a mere aggregate of individuals, which means that the individual is free from social determinism. Despite the death of God, the individual conscious subject remains the pinnacle of creation. This can also be expressed by saying that psychology can operate only at an individual level: it is not reducible to physiology, neuroscience, or any other lower-level discipline, but the higher-level disciplines, the social sciences such as sociology and economics, are reducible to individual psychology.

There is one further element to Sartre's theory of freedom, and this does not seem to be based on his ontology of relational consciousness and extended subjects. It is his claim that consciousness, like Parliament, cannot bind its successors. A decision not to gamble again cannot, claims Sartre, prevent one from gambling again: the decision must be remade whenever temptation arises (B&N: 32-3). He claims that explanations of one conscious event in terms of a previous conscious event are explanations of 'motivation' not 'causation' (B&N: 27). It is unclear what he means by this, since he never defines either 'motivation' or 'causation'. As his ontology rests on allowing conscious events genuine explanatory roles, however, it seems that he must mean that a conscious event can explain another conscious event, but this explanation should not be taken as one of causal determination. If the explanations were deterministic, then a consciousness would be able to bind its successors. This element of the theory of radical freedom, then, adds a claim to the ontology of relational experiences and extended subjects: it adds

the claim that the explanations that involve ineliminable reference to episodes of consciousness cannot be understood as deterministic.

This aspect of Sartre's theory of radical freedom is at the heart of his characterisation of existents that have the mode of being 'being for-itself' (*être pour-soi*) as 'non-substantial absolute[s]' (B&N: 619). The for-itself is an absolute because it contains within itself everything required for its existence: even the regions of mind-independent reality required for its existence are literally parts of it. This is Sartre's 'radical reversal of the idealist position' (B&N: 216), a radical reversal of Berkeleyan idealism, or phenomenism: where Berkeley held the world we experience to be contained within and dependent on an ontologically independent mind, Sartre held reality to be ontologically independent yet still contained within a mind that is dependent on it. But the for-itself is not a substance because it cannot be identified with a set of essential properties (see B&N: xxxii). In addition to all its properties, all the facts true of it, its facticity, a being for-itself possesses a freedom which precludes any deterministic explanation of its behaviour in terms of those properties. In this sense, a for-itself is not what it is: it is not simply the sum of facts true of it in terms of which psychological explanations can be given (see B&N: 67). My demythologisation of Sartre's use of the term 'nothingness' to describe consciousness, then, may have missed out an aspect of nothingness as Sartre understood it. I claimed that to call consciousness a nothingness, for Sartre, is to say that it is an abstract dependent part of the extended subject rather than a concrete independent part of it. It is a moment, not a piece. It cannot exist independently of the larger whole of which it is a part; it is not a being (see 4.3). It may be that there is more to Sartre's application of the term 'nothingness' to consciousness than this. It may be, that is, that Sartre understood the nothingness of consciousness to be the reason why the explanations given in terms of consciousness cannot be deterministic, that some aspect of the nothingness of consciousness is the reason why it escapes the nomological net. But it is difficult to tell whether or not Sartre did have this understanding of the term 'nothingness'. Although he claims that the

nothingness of consciousness is the root of freedom (B&N: 24-5), it is unclear whether this means just that the status of consciousness as a dependent part of the extended subject is the root of our freedom from mechanism, or whether he also meant the further claim that nothingness is the reason why psychological explanations are non-deterministic.

Sartre's belief that human action cannot be explained in terms of bodily mechanisms but must be explained with reference to conscious experience and his denial of social determinism, then, are based on his theory that phenomenal consciousness consists in a relation between brain or body and the object of consciousness, a relation which must be understood as a property, an abstract part or moment, of an extended subject comprising the body and aspects of its physical environment. But his further claim that the explanations of human actions given in terms of experiences are not deterministic is not supported by his theory of phenomenal consciousness, and it is far from clear quite what grounds he considers himself to have for this assertion. The theory of freedom Sartre bases on his ontology of experience and the subject, furthermore, has no implications for the traditional question of the compatibility of freedom with determinism, since this question is not an ontological one. Compatibilists and incompatibilists in this debate agree that a free act is one that is to be explained with reference to the aims and projects of the subject, and differ only over whether this is sufficient for the act to be free. Compatibilists say that it is, so determinism is no threat to freedom so long as it does not preclude explanation of action in these terms, and incompatibilists claim that a free act is one based on aims and projects that are not themselves determined, and so determinism is incompatible with freedom (see Honderich 1988, 472-5). This question of compatibility, then, is independent of the question of the role of mental vocabulary in the explanation of human action.

Sartre's conception of pre-reflective self-awareness, of the awareness we have of our own conscious states as they occur, is also based on his account

of phenomenal consciousness. As we have seen (2.6), his claim that consciousness consists in apprehension of mind-independent reality requires that pre-reflective self-awareness is parasitic on this apprehension. Pre-reflective awareness, that is, is a result of the deployment in experience of determinations applied to the object of experience but based on the aims and projects of the subject. The determinations deployed imply the aims and projects on which they are based; 'consciousness (of) thirst', for example, 'is apprehended *by means of* the glass of water as desirable' (B&N: 102). In addition to pre-reflective awareness of the ways in which we are aware of the world, Sartre contends that we have pre-reflective awareness of our own radical freedom. We have pre-reflective awareness, that is, of the fact that the aims and projects that we pursue, and which help to shape our worlds, are not the result of physiological mechanisms or social determinism, but can be explained only in terms of our own conscious choices, choices that are not constrained by previous episodes of consciousness. Reflection on this freedom, he contends, reveals our absolute responsibility for the aims and projects we pursue and hence for the world we construct around us. And awareness of this responsibility is anguish (B&N: 39-40). In order to avoid this anguish, in order to conceal the freedom that we are pre-reflectively aware of, we engage in 'bad faith' (*mauvaise foi*): we avoid making explicit in reflection the freedom of which we are pre-reflectively aware, and we attempt to convince ourselves that we have pre-determined natures that constrain us and account for our actions. Sartre's theory of bad faith is partly built on two aspects of his theory of phenomenal consciousness: the distinction between *thetic* and *nonthetic* awareness, and the account of imaginative experience. We aim to avoid explicit *thetic* awareness of the freedom that we are *nonthetically* aware of, and we imagine ourselves as being constrained in ways that absolve us of responsibility. The critiques of Sartre's theories of *thetic* and *nonthetic* awareness and of imaginative experience in chapters 1 and 3 of this thesis respectively have considerable ramifications for his theory of bad faith.

In 1.4, we saw that Sartre holds that nonthetic awareness is required to explain how events in a person's environment may affect the way that person is aware of other things without that person being able to report that those events had this effect. The fact that the subject cannot report their nonthetic awareness, for Sartre, is evidence that the awareness is nonthetic: representational awareness, he holds, is linguistically articulable. But, as we also saw in 1.4, this contention conflates the notion of *representation* with that of *conceptual representation*. Only conceptual representations are inferentially and rationally linked to one another: that is what makes them conceptual representations (see 1.4). So it remains possible for a representation of an object to be unreportable if it is not conceptual, which is to say that it does not stand in inferential relations to beliefs such as the belief that the object is represented. In addition to this, we saw in 1.4 that Sartre also holds that nonthetic awareness of objects is required to explain how one can deliberately turn attention to those objects, but as we have seen this role could equally be played by vague representational awareness that becomes more explicit as attention is focused, and simple experiments suggest that we do indeed have vague representational awareness of objects that we are not focusing attention on.

These two points together have implications for Sartre's theory of bad faith. In order to avoid the paradoxical claim that when deliberately hiding some truth from oneself, one must already know what that truth is and classify it as undesirable, Sartre recommends that we construe bad faith as involving nonthetic awareness of the truth while avoiding focusing attention on it and hence avoiding explicit, thetic awareness of it (B&N: 54, 68-70). The problem with this is that if deliberately turning attention towards something seems to involve representational awareness of it, then so does deliberately *not* turning attention to it. Bad faith, it seems, requires classifying the undesirable as undesirable. But we can modify Sartre's position and claim instead that bad faith involves nonconceptual representation of the thing to be avoided: as representation, this form of awareness can classify the thing as to be avoided;

as nonconceptual, this representation will not stand in inferential relations to explicit and articulable beliefs and so cannot threaten the subject's cognitive ignorance of the thing to be avoided. This modification, though, would bring Sartre's position much closer to Freud's: the Freudian unconscious consists of representations that are not rationally related either to each other or to conscious, cognitive beliefs about reality, and are thereby nonconceptual (1957, 186-7). But this modification would not bring with it Freud's construal of the activity of unconscious representations as the exchange and discharge of 'cathectic' energy (1957, 186-7), the 'blind forces' that Sartre is so opposed to (B&N: 52).

The critique of Sartre's theory of imaginative experience in 3.5 has a more devastating impact on an aspect of Sartre's theory of bad faith. Sartre claims that bad faith is a form of imaginative consciousness. 'One *puts oneself* in bad faith as one goes to sleep, and one is in bad faith as one dreams' (B&N: 68). As we saw, Sartre identifies two characteristics of imaginative experience which differentiate it from perceptual experience: imaginative experience stipulates the features of an object rather than attempting to discern them, and imaginative experience does not posit its object as real and present. The second of these characteristics, I argued, is not entailed by the first, cannot be considered the sole distinguishing characteristic of imaginative experience, and seems obviously false in the case of vivid hallucinations and dreams. So the second characteristic should be considered at most an inessential part of some imaginative experience, not part of the essence of imagination. This relegation of this characteristic to the status of a contingent fact about some imaginative experience undermines Sartre's claim that the use of imagination in bad faith can never convince the subject that the imagined scenario is real. When, in bad faith, Walter considers himself identical with his social role as a waiter, according to Sartre, Walter enacts the role of a waiter to such a precise degree that his own behaviour becomes an 'analogue' of waiterhood in the same way that the picture of Peter is an 'analogue' of Peter or the way in which 'the actor is Hamlet' (B&N: 60). Walter can consider himself as a

waiter only by taking up the imaginative attitude towards himself, surpassing his analogical behaviour towards the intentional object of himself as imagined waiter (B&N: 60). Sartre's claim that imagination never posits its object as real and present allows him to claim that Walter remains aware that the imaginary waiter is not the real Walter, however much he may make-believe otherwise. But if this characteristic of imaginative experience is at most only a contingent fact about imaginative experiences, then Sartre's move from the claim that Walter only imagines himself as a waiter to the claim that Walter is not wholly convinced that he is defined by waiterhood is illegitimate: if imaginative experience can involve mistakenly positing the intentional object as real and present, as it seems to in the cases of convincing dreams and hallucinations, then Walter's use of imagination may convince him that he *is* (identical with) the waiter. We may, that is, be as genuinely misled by our use of imagination in bad faith as we can be by dreams and hallucinations.

Sartre's conception of bad faith as involving nonrepresentational awareness of truths that we wish to hide from ourselves, and the refusal to make this awareness explicit, a refusal aided and abetted by imagining an alternative scenario even though this imagination can never wholly convince us, then, needs to be modified in the light of my critiques of Sartre's theories of nonthetic awareness and imagination. It must be modified, that is, to the claim that bad faith involves nonconceptual awareness of the truth, awareness that is much like Freud's notion of unconscious mentality in that it does not stand in inferential relations to beliefs, and a use of imagination that may convince the subject of the reality of the imagined scenario. Sartrean bad faith after these modifications is not dissimilar to the Freudian conception of self-deception: we can wholly convince ourselves of the falsity of some fact of which we do have representational awareness, albeit a representational awareness that cannot be noticed to contradict our self-induced false belief.

The examination of Sartre's theory of phenomenal consciousness in this thesis also has ramifications for Sartre's theory of interpersonal relations.

Sartre's theory of the structures of interpersonal relations is not based on the thoughts we have about one another or the words we use of one another, but of the way in which we are phenomenally conscious of one another. The basis of interpersonal relations, for Sartre, is 'the look' (*le regard*). A crucial part of this theory is the claim that focusing attention on another person is thereby to cast that other person as an object rather than a subject. Although we can be aware that there are other subjects, for Sartre, this is something that can only be *experienced*: they cannot be *known* as subjects (B&N: 302). The subjectivity of the other, that is, can be experienced only as part of such experiences as shame and pride concerning one's own conduct. Such experiences imply the existence of another subject before whom one is ashamed or proud (B&N: 253, 257, 269). Given this experience, I can do either of two things: refuse to focus attention on the other person, and thereby continue to feel myself an object of their subjective gaze, or focus attention on them and thereby objectify them and remove from my experience their subjectivity (B&N: 285). But Sartre never makes clear why we cannot be positionally conscious of one another as *subjects*. The investigation of his theory of phenomenal consciousness in this thesis, moreover, suggests two reasons why he might have considered this to be the case. But these reasons would both be mistaken.

The first is the idea that when I am perceptually aware of something, that thing is necessarily an object for me. Perceiving a thing not only involves that thing being an object of apprehension, but also an intentional object. Some of Sartre's characterisations of the look suggest that this point underlies his claim that we cannot be perceptually aware of another person as a subject. We cannot pay attention to something as a subject, he writes, because 'attention is intentional direction towards objects' (B&N: 269). Similarly, '*that other consciousness* and *that other freedom* are never *given* to me; for if they were, they would be *known* and would therefore be an object' (B&N: 271). The subject is something 'which by definition I am unable to know — i.e. to posit as an object' (B&N: 270). But if, as these quotations suggest, Sartre's

reasoning is that experience is only ever of an object and hence we cannot experience a subject, his reasoning rests on an equivocation. To call something an object of apprehension is just to say that it is that which is apprehended, and to call something an intentional object is just to say that it is that which the intention is aimed at, in the same way as something can be the object of the exercise. Neither of these senses of the term are the same as the sense of 'object' as opposed to 'subject', the sense of 'object' as non-conscious thing. For something to be at the object-end of an intentional relation or a relation of apprehension is not the same as its being a metaphysical object, a thing that has no subjectivity. As we have seen (4.6), to say that something is at the subject-end of intentional relations or relations of apprehension is not to say that it is a metaphysical subject, the subject of psychological theorising, something with a subjective life. Sartre holds that it is the body or brain at the subject-end of such relations, but that the metaphysical subject is not simply this body but includes within it relations of apprehension and the entities at their object-ends as well as the entity at their subject-ends. So the distinction between a metaphysical subject and a metaphysical object is not the same as the distinction between something at the subject-end of an intentional relation or a relation of apprehension and the thing at its object-end. So the fact that whatever we experience is thereby an object of experience does not entail that we cannot experience a metaphysical subject as a subject.

The second reason why Sartre may have considered it impossible to experience another person as a subject stems from his theory of the application of determinations in thetic awareness. This reading is suggested by Sartre's claim that 'the Other-as-subject can in no way be known or even conceived as such' (B&N: 293; see B&N: 296). Discussing the wishful thinking of a woman on a date, he writes: 'The man who is speaking to her appears to her sincere and respectful as the table is round or square, as the wall colouring is blue or grey. The qualities thus attached to the person she is listening to are in this way fixed in a permanence like that of things, which is

no other than the projection of the strict present of the qualities into the temporal flux' (B&N: 55). And similarly, when someone looks at me I appear as an object to them because, for them, '*I am seated* as this inkwell *is on* the table; for the Other, *I am leaning over* the keyhole as this tree *is bent* by the wind' (B&N: 262). The idea at play here may be that when we apply determinations to one another in experience, we apply them in the same way as we apply determinations to objects: they appear to reveal real properties that are in some way definitive of the object applied to. Thus, for the other person, 'I have an outside, I have a nature' (B&N: 263), and this nature is the set of facts true of me that govern or regulate my behaviour; when I look at other people, 'I am fixing the people whom I see into objects' (B&N: 266). This observation, that we tend to reify one another as having entirely fixed natures in the same way as nonsentient things have, underlies much of Sartre's subsequent social theory, such as his analysis of anti-Semitism (1946b), and as a general sociological observation may well be true. But there seems no reason to believe that this reification is inevitable. There seems no reason why we should not apply to one another determinations that do not reify. Given that the structure of being for-itself can be articulated in words, as Sartre must suppose given that much of *Being and Nothingness* is given over to such an articulation, there seems no reason to suppose that it cannot be articulated in the determinations we apply to one another in experience. This may involve the breaking of an ingrained habit, but this is not the same as it being impossible.

The analysis of Sartre's theory of phenomenal consciousness, then, has not found in that theory any support for his claim that we cannot experience one another as subjects and are forever doomed to being seen by one another as objects with fixed natures. On the contrary, it has provided good reason to deny this pessimistic theory of the basis of interpersonal relations. Neither an object of apprehension nor an intentional object is an object in the same sense of 'object' as a metaphysical object with a fixed nature and no subjective life, and there seems no reason why our thetic awareness of one

another should not involve the deployment of determinations that apply only to metaphysical subjects, to entities with the mode of being ‘being for-itself’, to ‘non-substantial absolutes’, rather than the determinations that we apply to the regions of being in-itself that surround us.

Of the three major tenets of Sartre’s existentialism, then, we have found that his theory of radical freedom is largely based on his conception of the role of relational experiences in the explanation of the behaviour of extended subjects, but that it also involves a further claim, the claim that these explanations are non-deterministic, that cannot be drawn from his ontology of phenomenal consciousness; that his theory of bad faith is based on his theory of the relation between thetic and nonthetic experience and his theory of imagination, but must be revised in the light of the facts that nonthetic experience does not seem capable of performing the task that Sartre ascribes to it and that there is no good reason to uphold Sartre’s claim that imaginative experience can never mislead the subject; and that his theory that the basis of interpersonal relations — the look — necessarily involves the denial of one another’s subjectivity and freedom is not supported by his theory of phenomenal consciousness, which on the contrary provides all the materials required for its denial.

#### 5.4 The Last Word

It is the ‘privilege’ of the human individual, wrote Simone de Beauvoir, to be ‘a sovereign and unique subject amidst a universe of objects’, yet the subject is still constructed of the very stuff of objects, ‘is still a part of this world of which [it] is conscious’. ‘As long as there have been [humans] and they have lived’, she went on, ‘they have all felt this tragic ambiguity of their condition, but as long as there have been philosophers and they have thought, most of them have tried to mask it. They have striven to reduce mind to matter, or to reabsorb matter into mind, or to merge them within a single substance. Those

who have accepted the dualism have established a hierarchy between body and soul which permits of considering as negligible the part of the self which cannot be saved' (Beauvoir 1976, 7-8). Sartrean existentialism, she claims, preserves this ambiguity which others have sought to deny: it constructs the soul out of the body and its physical environment, unifying mind and situation, and endowing the human individual with a freedom from being determined by the physical world without denying the limitations imposed by the resistance of being in-itself, of which body and environment are constructed, to our projects.

In this thesis, we have seen just how Sartre does this. The key components of his theory of phenomenal consciousness which mark out his theory as a distinctive position in the debate over the nature of mind are the claim that phenomenal consciousness is not a representation of extra-cranial reality generated by neural stimulation, but is a relation between brain or body and a part of mind-independent reality apprehended, and the claim that the subject of psychological theorising is not the brain or body but a being-in-the-world, or extended subject, comprising the body and parts of its environment. We have seen that these two claims combine to make a theory of experience whose value lies in its distinctive construals of hallucination and of the behaviour that experience explains, construals which protect the theory from arguments for the claim that experience is representation of the environment occurring within a subject which is a pure immaterial soul or a physical brain or body. We have seen that this position allows for a satisfactory construal of illusion and of the qualitative aspects of experience. And we have seen that his position makes explanatory gains over the theories that hold experience to occur within a body and identify the subject with that body or the brain.

In the course of investigating these aspects of Sartre's theory, we have found that they are built on a phenomenology, or study of the nature of appearing, which can be considered free from theoretical presuppositions, and that his ontology of the human is based on a general ontology that construes reality to

be ultimately mind-independent in its existence and its structure, but the structure of the world to be partly owed to the way in which we are aware of this reality as well as partly owed to the structures it has. We have also seen that the major themes of his existentialist theory of the nature of the individual are to some extent built on his ontology of relational consciousness and the extended subject. This ontology guarantees freedom in the sense that it entails the falsity of mechanistic and social determinist theories of behaviour, but does not itself ground Sartre's additional belief that psychological explanations are indeterministic. Sartre's theory of bad faith is built on his theory of the classificatory nature of experience and the nature of imaginative experience, but in the light of the shortcomings of these theories must be revised to allow that bad faith may sometimes mislead subjects into genuinely believing the falsehoods that they attempt to convince themselves of. And we have seen that although Sartre seems to think his pessimistic view of the basis of interpersonal relations is based on his theory of awareness, it is not, and seems positively undermined by it. Sartre's affirmation of the 'ambiguity' of human existence of which Beauvoir wrote, then, needs an analysis of its ramifications for the nature of the human condition that is more cogent than Sartre's own. Despite its flaws and shortcomings, though, Sartre's outlook provides a distinctive position worthy of the attention of current anglophone philosophers.

## Notes

### Chapter 1

<sup>1</sup> Sartre's distinction between using a word as an object and using it as a concept is a rewording of the distinction he made in *What Is Literature?* between the poetic and prosaic attitudes to words. The poetic attitude treats the word as a thing, a sound or a shape with a history of differing uses by various writers, whereas the prosaic attitude treats the word purely as its meaning (1948, 1-25; compare 1981, 11). Sartre's distinction between these attitudes is often mistaken for a claim about the nature of poetry and prose writing, as though he claims that poetry employs words as objects in their own right ignoring their meaning and prose employs the meanings of words without regard to the words themselves (e.g. Murdoch 1953, 139-43; Caute 1950, vii-viii; Danto 1991, 29). But this is not Sartre's claim: in terms of the use / mention distinction employed in anglophone philosophy (see Quine 1961, 140), Sartre's claim is that the poetic attitude treats the word in the way in which it is treated when the word is mentioned, and the prosaic attitude treats it the way in which it is treated when it is used. Where the use / mention distinction allows a word to be either used or mentioned but not both at the same time, Sartre's distinction allows any particular occurrence of a word to involve a combination of poetic and prosaic attitudes. Sartre's disavowal of stylistic ambition in his philosophical writings does not contradict my claim in chapter 2 that 'The Pursuit of Being' is

modelled on Proust's epic novel, since the 'style' Sartre disavows is only the deliberate use of various senses of the same word.

<sup>2</sup> This use of 'knowledge' to mean 'knowledge of an object' rather than propositional 'knowledge that such-and-such is the case' may seem unfamiliar to anglophone readers. Ryle (1949, 161), for example, claimed that such usage 'abuse[s] the logic and even the grammar of the verb "to know"'. However this may be with the English verb, it is not the case with '*connaître*' which is not linked to ideas of propositional content and truth, and usually takes an object denoted by a singular term (e.g. 'do you know London?'). Propositional knowledge is associated in French with the verb '*savoir*', which is always '*savoir que ...*' ('knowledge that ...'). Note that Sartre's definition of *connaissance* as 'presence to —' therefore does not in itself rival such definitions of knowledge as (for example) 'justified true belief': the latter phrase can only be taken as a definition of propositional knowledge, or *savoir*.

<sup>3</sup> Barnes's translation reads 'attention is an intentional direction towards objects', but the 'an' has been added. The original reads: '*l'attention est direction intentionnelle vers des objets*' (p. 308).

<sup>4</sup> But not all mental phenomena have physical phenomena as objects. Brentano claims that all first-order mental phenomena have physical phenomena as objects, but higher-order mental phenomena have mental phenomena as objects. Seeing a tree has a physical phenomenon as object, but remembering seeing a tree has the mental phenomenon of seeing a tree as its object. This mental phenomenon as object, though, retains its physical phenomenon within it. There is no limit, for Brentano, on how many mental phenomena can stack up on the back of a first-order mental phenomenon: I can *remember thinking* about *wanting to see* a tree, and this would involve four mental phenomena, the last of which (seeing) includes a physical phenomenon (e.g. 1995, 129).

<sup>5</sup> Brentano's use of the term 'physical' to describe private mind-dependent appearances is significantly at odds with the current anglophone use of the term to describe public mind-independent material reality. Brentano calls mind-dependent appearances phenomena 'physical' for two reasons. First, they are often *taken to be* parts of mind-independent reality by the subject of the experience, so much so that 'belief in the real existence of physical phenomena ... [has] achieved the most general dissemination, been maintained with the utmost tenacity, and, indeed, even been shared for a long time by the most outstanding thinkers' (1995, 93). Second, since Brentano takes physicists to be empirical scientists he takes them to be studying the mind-dependent entities that they are directly aware of rather than a mind-independent reality that lies beyond them and of which they have no experience (1995, 98-100). For this reading of Brentano's conception of intentionality and his distinction between mental and physical phenomena, see also Bell 1990, 8-9 and Moran 1996.

<sup>6</sup> It may seem odd to claim that Chisholm got Brentano so wrong, especially given that he translated one of Brentano's works *The True and the Evident*, so had more than a cursory knowledge of Brentano. In my view, Chisholm is not the root of the mistake, but the hapless dupe of one Oskar Kraus. Brentano first published his theory of intentionality in 1874 and it had a huge impact, particularly on Meinong and Husserl who developed it in different ways. Husserl soon eclipsed his master, and by the first decade of the twentieth century was the most important philosopher in Europe. Brentano was going blind, and by 1903 was incapable of reading. He continued, though, to think about the relation between his thoughts and those of Husserl, Twardowski, and Meinong and to dictate notes on these issues. Then he met Kraus, who worked with him on notes and manuscripts expressing his later views on various subjects including intentionality. After Brentano died in 1917, Kraus was left with a free hand to publish whatever of Brentano's later thoughts that he saw fit. He gathered together various texts and published them as various books. These posthumous works express the later thoughts of Brentano, but are heavily edited by Kraus. *The True and the Evident* is one of them, so the text Chisholm knows best is a work of a post-Husserlian and post-Meinongian Brentano. Moreover, in 1924 Kraus published a 'second edition' of the 1874 book *Psychology From An Empirical Standpoint* and gave it a lengthy introduction and a plethora of detailed footnotes, which appear as the numbered footnotes in the current English edition, in an attempt to show that Brentano's later views are in fact the views Brentano *always* held (see Simons 1995; Moran 1996). Whenever Brentano makes a clear statement of his early view, Kraus adds a long, detailed, and quite obscure note explaining how it is that Brentano managed to say the opposite of what he *really* meant. And this, I suggest, is the root of Chisholm's mistaken reading of Brentano's early book: he reads Brentano's later views back into it, with the help of Oskar Kraus.

<sup>7</sup> The protagonists of this debate not only followed Chisholm in ascribing to Brentano the claims that mental events are representational and that this representation has some intimate connection with intentionality, they also followed Quine (1960, § 45) in ascribing to Brentano a third claim he did not make: Chisholm's view that intentionality is irreducible in the sense that it cannot be defined in terms of something else (see Chisholm 1957, ch. 11; Dennett 1987, 340).

<sup>8</sup> Sartre does not seem to have read Brentano himself. He mentions Brentano only once in *Being and Nothingness*, when mentioning 'The intentionality of Brentano and Husserl' without distinguishing the theories of the two thinkers (B&N: 25).

<sup>9</sup> In claiming that Sartre uses the term 'consciousness' in a narrow and a broad sense, I have deliberately simplified the matter. He very occasionally uses the term in a third sense to mean an enduring mind, an synthesis over time of successive consciousnesses in the broad sense

(e.g. B&N: 253). This third sense has no bearing on the issues discussed in this thesis, and is anyway rare in Sartre's writings, and so will not be used in this thesis.

<sup>10</sup> It may seem that Sartre's theory of the 'nothingness' and concomitant freedom of consciousness (e.g. B&N: 24-5) is incompatible with the dependence of consciousness on the brain that is implied in my discussion of split-brain patients, on the grounds that the brain is in Sartre's terms a part of being in-itself rather than a nothingness, and as such is presumably subject to the same causal determinism as the rest of being in-itself. But this dualistic reading of Sartre is mistaken. I explain the antireductionist, holistic, monistic ontology of Sartre's account of consciousness-in-the-world in chapter 4, where I defend it against arguments for reductionism and argue that it is positively superior to reductionism.

<sup>11</sup> The distinction between positional and nonpositional awareness grounds a close connection between Sartre's use of the term '*connaissance*' and knowledge in the sense of 'knowledge that p' (see note 2, above): if I am nonpositionally aware of a figure standing to the left of the centre of my attention, and that person is Pierre, I may not know that that person is Pierre simply because I do not have sufficiently detailed awareness of him. Knowing that he is Pierre would require the detail of positional awareness (*connaissance*) of him. I return to this point in discussing the thetic component of experience in 2.3.

<sup>12</sup> I have replaced Barnes's 'seen from the point of view of the "this"' with 'looking at the *this*', on the grounds that Barnes's translation is confusing on at least two counts. First, it seems to imply that the object of visual perception always has its own point of view on reality. Since such objects are often non-conscious chunks of being in-itself and Sartre takes consciousness to provide (indeed, to *be*) a point of view on the world, Sartre does not hold that the 'this' always has a point of view. Second, Sartre does not use the phrase '*point de vue*' in the quoted passage. The phrase I have retranslated is: '*vue de côté du ceci*', which literally means 'looking at the side of the *this*'. Unfortunately, this phrase does not clearly convey Sartre's meaning, which is: a perception involves consciousness *and* object; we are concerned here with the object. His point is that the negation is not part of the object, but part of the consciousness. *Vue de côté du* consciousness, then, the negation is wholly real: it is part of the structure of consciousness, not of the object.

<sup>13</sup> Sartre also claims that imaginative experience is distinct from perceptual experience on this score: in imagination, he claims, the object is *never* posited as present and existent (PI: 11-2; B&N: 26). We shall see in chapter 3 (3.5) that there is good reason to reject this claim.

<sup>14</sup> In Sartre's novel *Nausea*, Roquentin has experiences of his surroundings unstructured by determinations, and so discovers the gap between the way in which reality is and the way in which it is experienced (179-85). Moreover, Roquentin has these experiences after

completing the only project in his life, that of writing a biography. It may seem that Sartre is here claiming that it is possible to have experiences that are not structured by projects. However, in the light of Sartre's later claim that being for-itself (the type of being had by humans) is always and necessarily engaged in projects and hence directed towards the future (B&N: 125), this passage from *Nausea* is best read as a thought-experiment designed to dramatise the claim that the determinations of perception are to some extent a function of the perceiver's projects. That is, it is best read as the claim that, impossible though it be, were one to have no projects, one could perceive reality without instrumental determinations.

<sup>15</sup> In the famous passages from *Nausea* in which Roquentin discovers the gap between the way reality is and the determinations applied to it in experience, he expresses this view in linguistic terms: 'Things have broken free from their names' (180). This leads Danto to claim that Sartre is attempting to express 'the failure of fit between language and reality' (1991, 7). However, there are three good reasons not to take these passages as evidence that Sartre considered determinations to be linguistic. First, some passages of *Nausea* can be taken to imply that words are parasitic on more basic determinations: 'Words had disappeared, and with them the meaning of things, the methods of using them, the feeble landmarks which men have traced on their surface' (182). On this reading, Sartre is expressing the view that the ways in which reality is structured in experience, thought, and language are all imposed by our practical engagement with it (see Murdoch 1953, ch. 1). Second, Roquentin should not be confused for Sartre: although Sartre is intending to convey certain ideas in *Nausea*, these are not necessarily the ideas he attributes to the central character. Indeed, Roquentin is a biographer, not a philosopher; use of linguistic terminology seems natural, but his supposedly spontaneous experiences and reports of them would seem a little strained if complicated by reflections on the relation between the structures of experience and the structures of language. Third, even if Sartre *did* consider determinations to be linguistic when he wrote *Nausea*, this book was published five years before *Being and Nothingness*. Sartre's views on this subject may have changed over this period, just as his views on self-awareness did. It is for this reason that *Being and Nothingness* should be taken as the canonical text of the early Sartre (see 0.1).

<sup>16</sup> This is the close relation between *connaissance* and *savoir* mentioned in note 11, above.

<sup>17</sup> Sartre presumably adopts the view that deliberately turning attention towards something requires some prior awareness of it from Heidegger, who argues that any enquiry requires a prior understanding (*Verstehen*) of the subject-matter enquired about. Heidegger claims that this requirement is twofold. First, prior understanding is required for there to be any motivation for the enquiry: without *some* comprehension of x, it would not be possible to want to enquire into x (1962, §§ 2-4, 32-33). Second, enquiry is a process of interpretation (*Auslegung*), which

simply makes explicit that which was already implicit in understanding (1962, §§ 2, 14, 32). Heidegger's view, in turn, is presumably derived from Meno's Paradox. When Socrates declared his intention to enquire into the essence of excellence, Plato tells us, Meno replied that such enquiry is useless since unless one already knows what excellence is one will not know where to conduct one's search and will not recognise the object of enquiry when one meets with it (Plato 1985, 80d5-e6). Heidegger follows Socrates in claiming that the prerequisite of enquiry is only an implicit and unarticulated knowledge that is made explicit by enquiry, but not so far as to agree that this implicit knowledge is a residue of a former life (Plato 1985, 81c5-d5). Sartre differs from Socrates and Heidegger in that he transforms their claim about enquiry into a claim about awareness.

<sup>18</sup> My claim that Sartre implicitly takes determinations to be conceptual does not undermine my claim that he does not take determinations to be linguistic, since he would deny that concepts are linguistic on the grounds that he denies that any part of the structure of consciousness is linguistic (see 1.3 and note 15 above).

<sup>19</sup> Hubert Dreyfus (1991, ch. 5; 1996; 2000) continues to conflate representational content with conceptual representational content. He argues that the dominant construal of action as bodily movement initiated or governed by representation of the aim of the act and / or of the bodily movements to be made is false on the grounds that action involves 'absorbed coping', bodily movement appropriate to the task in the absence of any representation of that movement. All of the reasons he gives for his claim that absorbed coping does not involve representation, however, boil down to the fact that the agent need not have articulable beliefs about the appropriate movements in order to make those movements, which shows only that absorbed coping does not involve *conceptual* representation.

## Chapter 2

<sup>1</sup> In reconstructing the form of the ontological argument given by Descartes, I have drawn not only on the Fifth Meditation, where the argument is stated, but also on the Third Meditation where the principles I claim the argument rests on are stated as part of a different argument for the existence of God. Interpretation of the Fifth Meditation is particularly contentious, partly due to its brevity. The usual interpretation does not draw on the Third Meditation, but takes Descartes to be implicitly echoing Anselm's principle that it is greater to exist than not to. On this reading, Descartes is simply claiming that the greatest possible being must exist, without consideration of the hierarchy of realities (e.g. Williams 1978, 154). But in the Synopsis of *Meditations* Descartes claims to have 'set out all the premises on which a desired proposition

depends, before drawing any conclusions about it' (1984, 9; see 110). Descartes clearly did not understand any of his own arguments, therefore, to involve premises that he did not explicitly state. Moreover, Descartes claims that his ontological argument shows not only that God exists but also 'at the same time ... that everything else depends on him' (1984, 48). If we understand Descartes to be claiming that it is greater to exist than not to exist, then Descartes has failed to provide the premise that the greatest being is the one on which all else depends. These problems do not arise if the Fifth Meditation is read in the light of the Third.

<sup>2</sup> On the 'two-conception' reading of Kant, however, as Baldwin (1996, 86) points out, Sartre's position is very close to Kant's. It claims that consciousness is direct apprehension of mind-independent reality, but apprehension of it in such a way as to construct the familiar 'world' of experience and action. But this point is independent of the question of whether Sartre considers being in-itself to have any structure at all, and to what extent he considers the structures of experience to map or reveal such a structure.

<sup>3</sup> This reading of Husserl is very controversial. The dominant reading denies that Husserl was interested in ontology at all. Although he has a 'tendency to transpose his epistemological theories into an ontological mode', on the dominant reading, we must 'disentangle and discard' Husserl's ontological language (Bell 1990, 168-9; see also Butts 1961, 426; Smith and McIntyre 1982, 98-9; Hall 1982). And not all those who agree that Husserl is concerned with ontology agree that he is a phenomenalist (see Drummond 1990). But there is more that can be said for Sartre's reading, as we will see in discussing § III of 'The Pursuit of Being' (in 2.2), and Sartre is not alone in holding it (see also Gurwitsch 1964, 184 and 223-7; Philipse 1995; Priest 1999). Much current Husserl scholarship is based on the Husserl archives in Leuven, Belgium, and on the continuing publication of the manuscripts in that archive as *Husserliana*. The archive opened, and *Husserliana* began, in 1950 – seven years after the publication of *Being and Nothingness*. In addition, Sartre never met Husserl, nor did he hear him lecture. Sartre's critique, that is, is based entirely on the works published in Husserl's lifetime. In order to understand Sartre's critique of Husserl, therefore, I have relied only on the texts available to Sartre and on secondary literature discussing just those texts.

<sup>4</sup> Actually, Sartre lists four embarrassing dualisms. I have missed out the 'duality of potency and act' since it does not bear directly on the issue of our access to the world around us. For Sartre, reducing existents to their manifestations is not only a way of putting us in direct perceptual contact with the world, but also has ramifications for the metaphysics of selfhood and for our knowledge of other selves. Although not a direct concern of this thesis, Sartre's discussions of selfhood and intersubjectivity are mentioned in 2.4 in order to clarify part of one reading of his 'ontological proof'.

<sup>5</sup> Catalano and Wider presumably take this passage to affirm the view of Roquentin, diarist-narrator of Sartre's first novel *Nausea*, that existence remains hidden until revealed by some special experience (see Sartre 1938, 182-3). But, as I have mentioned before, it is a mistake to confuse Roquentin for Sartre at all, never mind the Sartre of *Being and Nothingness* (see chapter 1, notes 14 and 15, above).

<sup>6</sup> *Grand Larousse Universel*, 1994 edn., s.v. 'Translucide' (15: 10365). Sartre does use the term 'transparency' (*transparence*) once in *Being and Nothingness* (B&N: 164), but since this repeats a point which Sartre first made using the term '*translucidité*' (B&N: 103), this use of 'transparence' should be considered a slip of the pen or a printer's error, not taken as indicating a commitment to the transparency (as opposed to translucency) of consciousness. Most commentators overlook the distinction between 'transparency' and 'translucency' when discussing Sartre's conception of self-awareness, with the notable exception of Morris 1992.

<sup>7</sup> Wider (1997, 104-6) also understands this passage as an argument for the claim that consciousness cannot be ignorant of itself, but further claims that the argument is not as bad as most scholars make out since it is supported by Sartre's claim that to be aware of an object is to be aware of that object as other than the awareness of it, and so implicitly to be aware of one's awareness. She concedes, however, that Sartre never directly connects this latter claim to the passage in question. If I am right, there is a good reason why Sartre does not make this connection: he does not consider the passage in question to constitute an argument for the claim that consciousness must involve consciousness of it in the first place. (Hartmann (1966, 20-30) also considers this passage to be an argument for Sartre's position but, curiously, does not object to it.)

<sup>8</sup> This paragraph is followed by a short paragraph in which Sartre introduces his bracketing of 'of' in the phrase 'consciousness (of) itself', and these two paragraphs break the flow of § III. The sentence immediately following them is: 'This self-consciousness (*conscience (de) soi*) we ought to consider not as a new consciousness, but as *the only mode of existence which is possible for a consciousness of something*' (B&N: xxx; Sartre's italics). But the foregoing two paragraphs license no such claim: at most they license the claim that conscious activities and consciousnesses that can be reflected on involve self-awareness. The claim is licensed, however, by the paragraphs preceding these two, those that ascribe to Husserl the view that the ontological self-sufficiency of consciousness requires its transparency. Perhaps the paragraphs in Sartre's own voice were inserted at a late stage.

<sup>9</sup> This quotation provides further evidence that Sartre is not presenting his own views here, but presenting a view he attributes to his opponents: for Sartre, consciousness is not

'existence through and through' but precisely the opposite — a 'nothingness' (e.g. B&N: 28). What Sartre means by this will be discussed in 4.3.

<sup>10</sup> Because Sartre is concerned with Humean rather than Cartesian scepticism, attempts to meet the challenge of Cartesian scepticism without asserting our direct access to reality or to other facts do not even potentially undermine Sartre's claim that such direct access is necessary to avoid scepticism. There are two groups of such arguments: there are those that claim that the conclusion of Cartesian scepticism must undermine belief in its premises if it is to undermine *all* beliefs, and hence that it is self-undermining (e.g. Wilson 1978, 35-6; Wright 1991); and there are those that claim that general sceptical scenarios fail to undermine individual beliefs such as belief in mind-independent reality or the belief that ripe lemons are yellow (e.g. Goldman 1976; Nozick 1981, 197-247). The Humean (and Sartrean) claim that unless we have direct access to reality we cannot be sure whether it exists or what it consists in is not undermined by arguments from either of these groups.

<sup>11</sup> Danto's (1975, 37) characterisation of Sartre's methodology as an attempt to infer the nature of reality on the basis of the phenomenology of experience, therefore, ascribes to Sartre a method that Sartre claims — right at the beginning of *Being and Nothingness* — to be futile.

<sup>12</sup> It might be thought that learning this fact about the world does not require *action* as such, since merely looking at an object and willing it to move does not result in it moving. However, action is sometimes successful. The failure of merely willing an object to move does not entail anything about the object, since it only shows that mere willing is not enough to move something. The failure of my attempt to lift an object when I know that I have lifted objects before, on the other hand, entails something about the object: that there is some fact about *it* independent of me that prevents my usual strategy from working. More importantly, Sartre's claim that failed actions reveal the fact that objects have mind-independent natures in virtue of which they are subject to deterministic laws does not conflict with his opposition to theories that claim that the nature of reality is hidden behind appearances: Sartre has not here reintroduced those embarrassing dualisms that he claims to be keen to avoid. This is because an entity's 'principle of being', on the basis of which it resists some of my aims, is not necessarily hidden: it may be discoverable by further inspection of the entity. Sartre's understanding of the relation between an entity's appearance and its true nature will be discussed in the conclusions to this thesis (5.2).

<sup>13</sup> This is a further reason why McCulloch's claim that Sartre is arguing for a position between those of Descartes and Berkeley (see 2.2) is misleading: Berkeley postulated God to account for the resistance of objects, but Husserl did not.

<sup>14</sup> In *The Transcendence of the Ego*, Sartre had argued that abandoning the notion of an ego separate from the body and the world in general is a sufficient condition for escaping solipsism, but in *Being and Nothingness* he argued that it is only a necessary condition: there remains the problem of showing that other bodies are centres of consciousness (B&N: 235). Much of the progression of Sartre's thought over his whole lifetime (like much of Proust's character Marcel's) is driven by a desire to overcome solipsism and discover the ramifications of the way in which solipsism is overcome for inter-personal relations (e.g. B&N: Part Three). In an interview towards the end of his life, Sartre claimed that the work on solipsism and intersubjectivity was the only significant failure of *Being and Nothingness* (1981, 13).

<sup>15</sup> It is crucial to Sartre's argument that he is concerned with *understanding* 'being', not *acquiring* the concept. That is, Sartre's argument is not to be understood as echoing Descartes's meditation on the concept of a single thing capable undergoing change, such as a piece of wax (1984, 20-2). Had Sartre's argument been concerned to show that experience in general must be apprehension of being since otherwise we could not acquire the concept 'being', the argument would be seriously deficient insofar as it does not rule out the possibility that 'being' is an innate concept, a parallel to the conclusion Descartes draws from his meditation (1984, 26). Innate or not, Sartre's point is that we could not understand the concept 'being' without apprehension of being.

<sup>16</sup> It is crucial that this argument is concerned with our understanding of 'being', rather than 'world' or terms that designate worldly entities such as 'table' or 'tree'. No argument concerned to show that in order to understand these latter terms we must be acquainted with the referents of such terms (e.g. Valberg 1992, 47-54) can establish Naïve Realism, since any such argument is compatible with the Kantian claim (on the 'two-object' reading of Kant) that such terms designate sequences of *phenomena*, beyond which the realm of true being lies (Kant 1929, A367-80).

<sup>17</sup> Barnes's translation reads 'as the proof' where I have given 'as a replica'. Sartre's phrase is '*comme réplique*', meaning a replica, reply, or response. It does not mean proof.

## Chapter 3

<sup>1</sup> McDowell's metaphorical style in *Mind and World* makes it difficult to be confident that he there still construes perceptual visual experiences to be brain events, but I take it this is what

he means by describing perceptual experiences in causal terms as 'impressions ... impingements by the world on our sensibility' (1994, 10).

<sup>2</sup> Prima facie, it might seem as though the strong disjunctivist need not identify the perceptual experience with the causal chain, since the experience might be construed as a scattered event comprising at least the perceived object and relevant events occurring within the skin or within the head of the perceiver but not the events in between. Secunda facie, however, this option is not available to the disjunctivist. A scattered event is an event made up of two or more distinct parts that are not spatiotemporally contiguous. Since the parts of a scattered event are distinct, these parts can in principle occur in the absence of one another. A murder by poisoning, for example, may be a scattered event since it involves both an action on the part of the killer and the death of the killed, and these events may be spatiotemporally distinct and non-contiguous. Given such a scattered event, there is another possible world where the killed dies the same death, but as a result of self-poisoning. There is, that is, a single event common to the actual murder and the counterfactual suicide (see Sorensen 1985). So if a perceptual experience is construed as a scattered event comprising events internal to the body plus the object, those events internal to the body could have been brought about in the absence of the object. If this event internal to the body is a mental event, then it is a mental event that can occur either as part of a perception or as a hallucination depending on its causal aetiology. And this, of course, is precisely the view of perception disjunctivism denies: the view that a perception comprises a non-environment-involving mental event internal to the body plus some fact that relates this event to an appropriate object in the environment. Disjunctivists must, therefore, deny that the component of a perception that is internal to the body is a mental event. It is not enough just to claim that this component should not be *called* an experience: if there is a mental event common to perception and hallucination, then disjunctivism is false regardless of what that common event is called. What is required is the claim that when I see the London Eye, for example, the only mental event is the *relational* event of light being reflected from the London Eye, travelling to my eyes, and stimulating my visual system. And this, of course, is the claim that a perceptual visual experience is identical with a causal chain of events linking object and brain.

<sup>3</sup> McCulloch's proposal that Sartre's conception of experience be protected from the argument from hallucination by claiming that perceptual experience has a basic explanatory role and hallucinatory experience can be understood only in terms of it overlooks the fact that this weak disjunctivist conception of the relation between perception and hallucination differs from the account of hallucination Sartre provides in *The Psychology of Imagination*. McCulloch overlooks this, it seems, because he is unaware that Sartre provides an account of hallucination (see McCulloch 1994, 107-111).

<sup>4</sup> It may not be necessary that the events are neural, however; if all that is necessary is that a certain functional role is played, then the neurons could presumably be replaced by (for example) silicon.

<sup>5</sup> On silhouettes and back-lit objects, see Sorensen 1999.

<sup>6</sup> The distinction between type- and token-externalism as I use it is taken from Macdonald (1990): type-externalism is the claim that mental properties are individuated partly by reference to objects, events, or states of affairs beyond the skin of the thinker; token-externalism is the claim that instances of those properties have physical descriptions and / or spatio-temporal co-ordinates that include objects, events or states of affairs outside the skin of the thinker. Macdonald defends the coherence of combining type-externalism with token-internalism about mental states and events in general. When this combination is applied to experiences, it is what I have been calling weak disjunctivism, but Macdonald's defence of the combination does not block my argument against weak disjunctivism as she does not consider the problem raised by claiming that a token experience is generated by a token neural stimulation.

<sup>7</sup> I have here passed over the *prima facie* possibility that the experience might not be understood as a relation to the object but as a scattered event comprising spatio-temporally non-contiguous parts including the object because such a construal of experience is not available: see note 2.

<sup>8</sup> Sturgeon refers to disjunctivism as 'Disjunctive Quietism' on the grounds that, so far as he can see, disjunctivism fails to provide an account of the nature of hallucinatory experience. Although he considers this 'quietism' to be sufficient reason to reject disjunctivism, he concedes in a footnote that the quietism is in principle removable from disjunctivism, so a non-objectionable form of disjunctivism is in principle available (1998, 186 n4), but he does not go on to consider any non-quietist forms of disjunctivism. This is presumably because he thinks that no such form of disjunctivism has been proposed and is presenting a challenge to current disjunctivists to provide one. The disjunctivism Sartre provides in *The Psychology of Imagination*, as I show in 3.4 and 3.5, is non-quietist in just the way that Sturgeon demands, and so presents a counterexample to the general claim motivating his dismissal of disjunctivism.

<sup>9</sup> Malcolm's claim, though, is that we *do not* have experiences while asleep, but it seems on waking as though we have. Malcolm's argument for this rests on the claim that 'the idea that someone might reason, judge, imagine, or have impressions, presentations, illusions or hallucinations, while asleep, is a meaningless idea in the sense that we have no conception of what would establish that these things did or did not occur' (1959, 49-50). But there are two

central problems with the argument. First, it rests on Malcolm's definition of sleep-behaviour as 'quite relaxed, nearly motionless, and breathing' (1959, 27). Given this, he claims, there is no behaviour of the sleeper that would indicate occurring experiences, and the sleeper's memory after the event may be misleading (1959, 35-48). But this misrepresents sleep behaviour: in 'light' sleep, subjects move about, perspire, and even talk, as well as exhibiting rapid eye movements and a degree of muscular tonality and giving electroencephalogram and electro-oculogram readings resembling those of waking states (see Churchland 1988, 291-3). Malcolm dismisses this by claiming that in such states people 'are not ... fully asleep, although they are not awake' and cannot be dreaming 'in that pure sense of "dream" that has as its sole criterion the testimony of the awakened person' (1959, 99). This reduces Malcolm's position to the generally accepted and unremarkable claim that people do not have experiences in 'deep' sleep but only in 'light' sleep (Churchland 1988, 291-3; compare Malcolm 1959, 29-34). The second problem with Malcolm's argument is that it relies implicitly on verificationist approaches to meaning in order to ground its claim that it is 'meaningless' to suppose that people experience while asleep, and these linguistic doctrines are all either crude and oversimplified or just false (see Putnam 1962).

<sup>10</sup> In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre claims that imagination posits an object 'as existing elsewhere or not existing' (B&N: 26). It is not clear whether this is simply a gloss on the more detailed distinctions made in *The Psychology of Imagination*, a gloss which Sartre provides at PI: 12, or whether Sartre has changed his mind and decided that there are only two forms of imaginative positing rather than four. It does not matter for present purposes which of these interpretations is correct, however, since all that is relevant for present purposes is the question of whether it is acceptable to insist that imaginative experience necessarily posits its intentional object in a manner different from perception.

## Chapter 4

<sup>1</sup> The example, of course, is adapted from Hilary Putnam (1975, 139-42). Where Putnam construes the alternative reality — 'Twin Earth' — as a planet somewhere in our galaxy, I construe it as a counterfactual reality - a way Earth could have been, but is not. This serves to sharpen the issue: the same individual can exist in actual and counterfactual situations, but cannot be on two planets at once. When I say that the counterfactual reality 'resembles ours in all respects except ...', I mean that resemblance to include the fact that my body is in state

s at position p at time t in both realities (ignoring, as is customary, the fact that water is a constituent of human bodies).

<sup>2</sup> This is my translation of Sartre's phrase '*le tout donne leur sens et leur valeur aux parties*' (p. 123 of original text). Forrest Williams's translation is: 'the whole gives meaning to the parts' (IPC: 113), which in losing the term '*valeur*' loses with it the connotation of explanatory value.

<sup>3</sup> Sartre's distinction between analytic and synthetic thought in his early works should not be confused with his distinction between analytic and dialectical reason in *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. The earlier distinction, as I have explained, is between two possible views of a complex entity. The later distinction is between attitudes to the concepts employed in thought: the analytic attitude employs concepts that are already delineated and refuses to alter or refine them further, whereas the dialectical attitude, more Bergsonian than Hegelian, treats concepts as roughly delineated and fluid, to be constantly refined and reshaped as enquiry progresses. Philosophy, claims Sartre in his later work, is a dialectical enquiry because it recognises the socio-historical genesis of the concepts it employs and the location of the thinker and so does not treat concepts as given but as material to be refined, whereas the error of science is to take the uncritical analytic attitude towards concepts that artificially detaches them from their socio-historical location. Piaget confuses Sartre's earlier and later uses of the term 'analysis' when he claims that Sartre is wrong to claim that science is analytical in the sense of reductionist (Piaget 1971, 122): as we have seen, Sartre considered science to be haphazard in its ontological approach in his early work, so neutral over 'analysis' in that sense, but in his later work claimed science to be analytical in the sense of treating concepts as pre-formed givens. Sartre's later use of the term 'analytical' has more in common with the use made of it in twentieth century anglophone philosophy than does his earlier use. In particular, conceptual analysis is 'analytic' in this sense, in that it treats concepts such as 'mind', 'free will', and 'person', as already having a content that can be discovered by means of thought-experiments rather than as vague terms to be given precise meanings.

<sup>4</sup> Husserl admits that calling abstract, dependent, parts or moments 'parts' stretches the ordinary notion of part, according to which the parts of an object can exist independently of the object, but points out that he is stipulating a technical term rather than describing ordinary usage (§ 2).

<sup>5</sup> Hazel Barnes's translation reads: 'Consequently, the *results* of analysis cannot be covered over again by the *moments* of this synthesis'. Sartre's sentence is: '*Par suite, les résultats de l'analyse ne sauraient se recouvrir avec les moments de cette synthèse*' (p. 37). Barnes translates '*recouvrir*' as 'to cover over again', but it rather means to cover completely or

perfectly, as when upholstery covers a chair: ‘*recouvrir*’ requires the covering to match, capture, fit, or coincide with the covered in a precise way. Sartre’s claim here is that a synthetic whole has moments that do not match, capture, fit, or coincide with the parts of the whole, but are distinct properties over and above the structure of the parts, and so are overlooked by analysis which focuses solely on those parts.

<sup>6</sup> Sartre’s use of the terms ‘analytic’ and ‘synthetic’ in his early works (see note 2) derives solely from the use of these terms in anti-associationist psychology. Husserl uses these terms in the Kantian logical sense, according to which an analytic truth is one that predicates of a subject a predicate *already contained* in the concept used to pick out the subject, such as ‘all bachelors are unmarried’, whereas a synthetic proposition does not, such as ‘all bachelors are omnivores’ (see Husserl 1970, III, §§ 11-12).

<sup>7</sup> This notion of substance can be traced back to Aristotle’s *Categories* (1984, 2a12). The common characterisation of a substance as something that can exist on its own is parasitic on this notion of substance as something that cannot be predicated of another thing (e.g. 1984, 2a13; cf. 1a24-5): it means not that a substance is ontologically and metaphysically independent of all conditions, but that does not exist or occur as a property of something else, which is why Descartes for example can talk without contradiction of human souls and the extended universe as ‘created substances’ dependent for their existence on the continuing creative activity of God (1984, 31).

<sup>8</sup> This debate is sometimes framed in the language of causal realism, tacitly accepting the belief that a true causal explanation of event e in terms of event c is made true by the obtaining of some determinate causal relation between c and e that obtains independently of being expressed in an explanation, and so is sometimes framed in terms of causal *relations* rather than causal *explanations* (e.g. Kim 1988, 233-8; 1989a, 94; Papineau 2000). The claim that natural science is explanatorily adequate, causally closed, or complete, on this causal realist view, is the claim that natural science reports or aims to report the complete set of mind-independent causal relations with physical events in the effect position. The debate, however, is independent of this additional claim over the cement of the universe: the same debate can be held between philosophers who believe that there are no mind-independent causal relations (as Kim (1988, 237-8; 1989a, 92-3) acknowledges).

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